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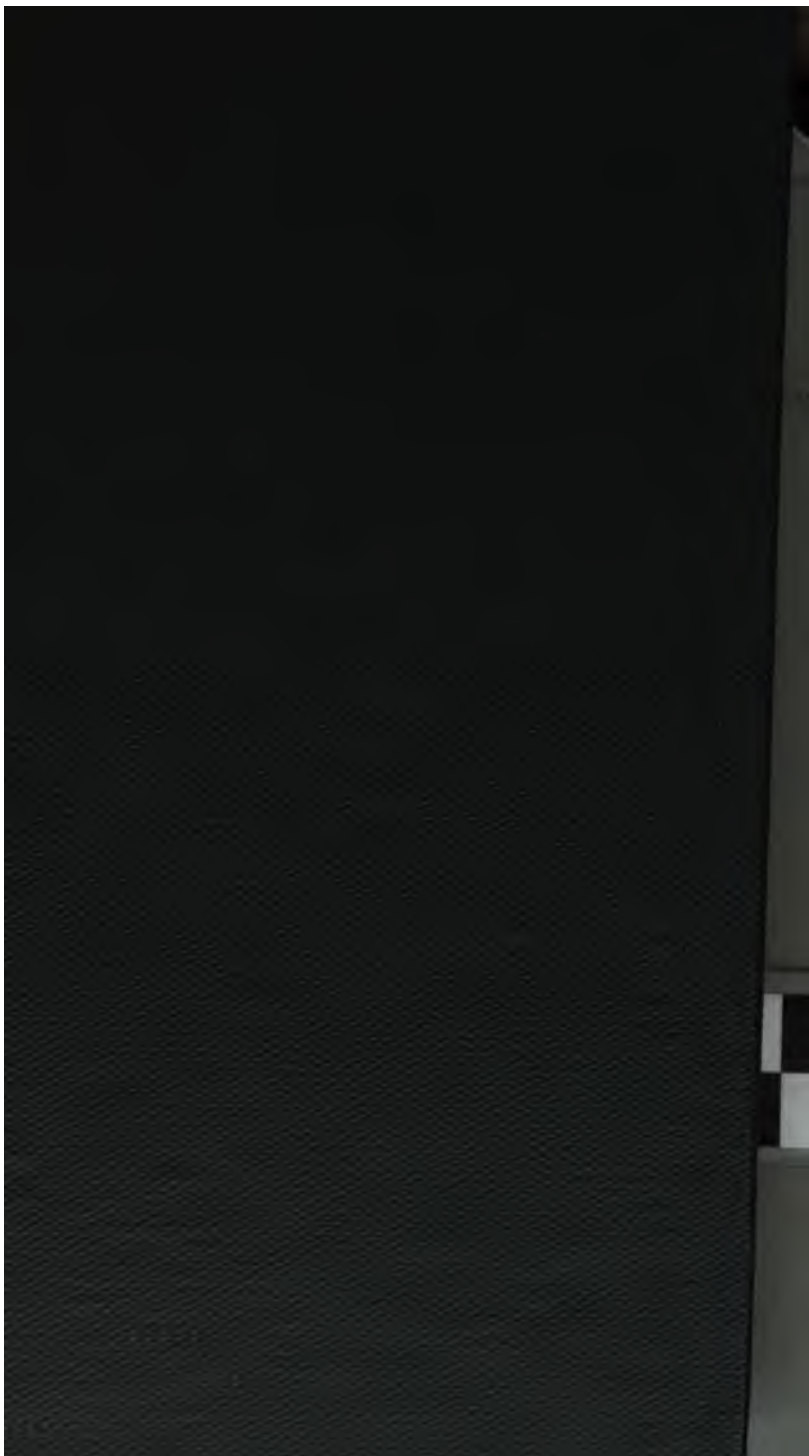
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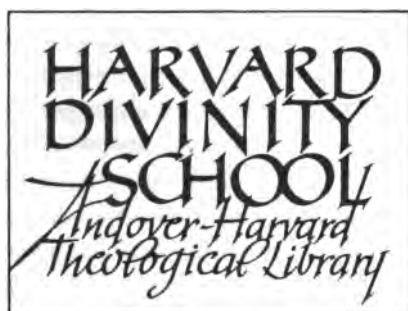
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O. P. W. Bush.





CHRIST IN THEOLOGY;

BEING THE

ANSWER OF THE AUTHOR,

BEFORE THE

HARTFORD CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF MINISTERS,

OCTOBER, 1849,

FOR THE DOCTRINES OF THE BOOK ENTITLED

"GOD IN CHRIST."

BY HORACE BUSHNELL.

HARTFORD:

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PREFACE.

THIS volume contains the matter of an answer made to the Ministerial Association of which I am a member, for the doctrines of my book, entitled "GOD IN CHRIST;" a book in which, it was rumored and extensively believed that I had published dangerous, or even fundamental errors. This answer was made, and the inquiry itself formally terminated, more than a year ago. Since that time I have been frequently importuned by my brethren, sometimes by letter, sometimes personally, to give it to the public. It has more than once been declared, in the religious prints, that I was about to do so.

For two reasons I have not been in haste to make the publication, though I will not disguise the intention I had in preparing it, to give it to the public at some future time. First, I had expressed my determination not to be drawn into a controversy; and, for a time, it was hardly possible to publish any thing, without being charged with receding from my purpose. But the condition of things appears to be changed. If still there is a degree of agitation continued in respect to my book, the public, I think, will not judge that it is of such a kind as compels me to break silence; which, if I now do, (for this is the first word I have printed regarding my book since its publication,) I think it will generally be seen that I am not descending at all to controversy, but simply performing a duty which I owe to the truth. It will be seen, too, by my readers, that the matter of this volume could hardly have been classed among writings of controversy at any time. It is not a handling of my

adversaries or critics, to any such extent as involves controversy. It is simply an ecclesiastical defense; and still it is rather a dissertation than a proper defense. Indeed, my intention was not so much to defend as to complete my doctrine by a fuller exposition of certain points, and by a reference to the opinions of others and of the church in this and other ages. My principal endeavor in it is to make my positions more intelligible; in accomplishing which, I rely, to a great extent, on tracing their import comparatively; which, in my book, I had scarcely done at all. My experience has led me to expect a good deal of unfairness; but I can not anticipate that any one, who cares to maintain even a show of justice, will impute a violation of my engagement. The time appears to have come when the heat of controversy and the pressure of assault are exhausted, and I publish now simply as regarding the truth. I hope my argument may be read and considered in the same manner. I have no victory to gain, and I see not that I have any to fear. As little have my brethren, who have been disturbed by my heresies. Whatever is now to be gained must be gained by truth and lost by error, and with that we may all be content.

I have also shrunk from the publication of this volume, so often requested, for a more private reason, which will be sufficiently suggested by citing the true maxim which a servant of God drew from his own experience, when he said,—“I am now satisfied that the main cause of man’s spiritual blindness is his letting his will into somewhat, or into that which he hath wrought, of whatsoever nature it be, and setting his heart and affections upon the work of his own hands or head.” It is possible, I think, and even easy, to bear the most violent public assaults, from unreasonable and bitter multitudes of men, without disturbance; yea, to have one’s peace consolidated by their pressure, and purified by the fires they kindle. But it is a very different thing to espouse, voluntarily, the work of one’s “own head” before them, even though it be to speak for the truth, and for that only; for there is like, in that case, to be somewhat of one’s will speaking through the interstices of the truth; or, what is worse, through

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the interstices of a shattered peace and a corrupted simplicity. Really to cease from one's own works, as God did from his, while maintaining the truth of them, is possible; but only by a most nice and subtle possibility, in which, if there be a failure, the rest of faith is lost and the sabbath of the spirit is broken. If still, despite of much self-distrust and some caution, the evil has been stealthily suffered, may God pardon so great infirmity; as also the infirmity of others, who, mixing their will with the truth, have been harsher judges, possibly, against me than he.

Perhaps it is required of me to state that I have taken what liberties I pleased with my manuscript since it was prepared. Only about half of it was read to the Association. In preparing it for the press, I have altered modes of arrangement and expression where it suited my convenience. Some parts I have omitted, some I have added; careful only to preserve the substance of the argument, and assuming the right to give it greater clearness and effect. Suffice it to say that nothing has been altered in such a way as to involve a change of position, or in such a way as to present a different case to the public from that which I presented to my brethren.

As my former volume was called "GOD IN CHRIST," I have called the present "CHRIST IN THEOLOGY," with a design that will be sufficiently obvious. To complete the descending series begun, there is wanted another volume, showing the still lower and, as it were, sedimentary subsidence of theology itself, precipitated in the confused mixtures of its elements; a volume that shall do upon the whole body of theological opinion, in New England, what my anonymous friend C. C. has done, with such fatal effect, upon the particular strictures of my adversaries. To see brought up, in distinct array before us, the multitudes of leaders and schools and theologic wars of only the century past,—the Supralapsarians, and Sublapsarians; the Arminianizers, and the true Calvinists; the Pelagians, and Augustinians; the Tasters, and the Exercisers; Exercisers by Divine Efficiency, and by human Self-Efficiency; the love-to-being-in-general virtue, the willing-to-be-damned virtue, and the love-to-one's-greatest happiness

virtue; no ability, all ability, and moral and natural ability distinguished; disciples by the new-creating act of Omnipotence, and by change of the governing purpose; atonement by punishment, and by expression; limited, and general; by imputation, and without imputation; trinitarians of a threefold distinction, of three psychologic persons, or of three sets of attributes; under a unity of oneness, or of necessary agreement, or of society and deliberative council;—nothing I think would more certainly disenchant us of our confidence in systematic orthodoxy, and the possibility, in human language, of an exact theologic science, than an exposition so practical and serious and withal so indisputably mournful,—so mournfully indisputable.

I very much desired, in my exposition of the Trinity, to present some illustrations from a manuscript dissertation of President Edwards, on that subject. Only a few months ago, I first heard of the existence of such a manuscript. It was described to me as “an *à priori* argument for the Trinity,” the “contents of which would excite a good deal of surprise,” if communicated to the public. The privilege of access to the manuscript is declined to me, as I understand, on the ground of “the nature of the contents.” As this manuscript has just now come into the possession of Dr. Dwight of Portland, it is to be hoped that, unless some restrictions on the use of it have descended as a trust from the author, he will disburden himself, as soon as may be, of the very important responsibility, so faithfully exercised, for a whole century now past, by persons not more competent, certainly, than Jonathan Edwards, to guard the orthodoxy of this very distinguished name.

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CHRIST IN THEOLOGY.

ANSWER BEFORE THE HARTFORD CENTRAL
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BRETHREN OF THE ASSOCIATION :

It was to be supposed that the charges of dangerous and fatal heresy, preferred in so many ways, and with so great emphasis, against my recent publication, entitled "GOD IN CHRIST," would excite your serious attention. It would even be strange if some of you had not been painfully disturbed on my account. What your precise design may be in raising a committee to examine my book and confer with me in regard to it, I am not sure that I understand. I suppose, however, that your design is to obtain, if possible, all the advantages or results of an ecclesiastical trial for the extirpation of heresy, in a way that is most fraternal, and one which, if no extirpation should be found necessary, would be less likely to disturb or permanently mar the cordiality of our brotherhood. In this view I consent to waive all formal objections, and meet you cordially in the proposed inquiry.

Indeed, I ought to say that, when you proposed to undertake this inquiry, I was rather obliged to you for it than otherwise; for I perceived that, having made yourselves responsible for some just and practically reliable conclusion, your very engagement would hold you to a closer inspection and a more exact apprehension of my doctrine, than, as yet, I have been able to secure.

The contents of my book were of a nature to require suspense and re-investigation, even to the full extent of Christian patience. It could not, as I well knew, approve itself to passion, or abide the test of extempore judgments. Accordingly, almost no one of my representations has, to this moment, been set forth by the assailants of my orthodoxy, in the meaning intended by me, to be discussed according to its merits *in that meaning*; but, contrary to this, they have been almost wholly occupied in passing sentence on opinions manufactured by themselves, and which I as heartily reject as they. In this I am not disappointed. I even advertised the expectation of just such a result beforehand, and showed in what manner it would come to pass. Now, I am equally confident of a different result; for you have set yourselves to this inquiry, not as being separated from all responsibility to me, or as having nothing more serious to do than just to frighten yourselves and the public by your extempore constructions. You have undertaken to find my true position,—to see things not under your constructions only, but under mine; in a word, to understand me. Which, if you do, I shall finally get what most I want and have seemed most likely to fail of. And then, when once you have come into my position, or only into some tolerably correct apprehension of it, I shall be as little anxious as possible, in regard to any judgment you may form of my soundness. Indeed, I think your own anxieties, also, will be as comfortably disposed of as mine.

Since you have undertaken the investigation of my book in this responsible and, I hope, unprejudiced manner, it has become a question with me in what way

I can best facilitate your undertaking; and especially, by what method I may render my intended meaning in the book more easy or intelligible. In this view, I have occupied the leisure hours of my summer in preparing, what may be called, a re-statement of the points in issue; differing from the former statement, in the fact that I am able to make it with all the objections and confutations offered to that in full view; and especially in the fact that I endeavor, not so much to present my own sentiments in the simple, absolute way, as to exhibit them comparatively, under historic references. As my book is a simple giving out of my own convictions from my own center of thought, I propose now to change the attitude of inquiry, and offer, what, perhaps, will be more intelligible to some, a more relative view of the same things. It is not my design or wish, in this article, to modify any of my positions; though I should rejoice to give that evidence of devotion to the truth, if any thing had occurred to modify my convictions. Neither is it my design to go into any argument or controversy, however indirectly, with my reviewers; though it costs me no mortification to allow the hope that, taking advantage of the strictures and adverse criticisms somewhat plentifully supplied me, I may be able now to present a sharper and more explicit statement of my views of these great subjects. However this may be, I am quite sure of clearing my positions more effectually, and surrounding them with stronger lights of evidence, by passing into the field of historical inquiry and comparison, to investigate and settle their relations to what others have held in regard to the same subjects.

No doctrine can sufficiently reveal its truth, until it is set off by the reliefs of history and shown to hold a legitimate, normal connection with historic causes, of which it is, in some sense, the natural growth and issue. For, as no real and sober truth is the want of any single man, so no pretended truth is likely to be regarded as any thing better than a personal caprice or eccentricity, until other minds are seen to have been exercised in a similar way, and, by rudimental efforts of one kind or another, reaching after the same thing. I hope, therefore, it will not be suspected that I am anxious, in the historic references I make, to establish a repute of orthodoxy. I will even declare to you beforehand that I am not orthodox, according to any precise type of orthodoxy that I know; and when I come to points of deviation from what I suppose to be the most authoritative and proper orthodoxy, I shall frankly show where the deviation is, and give you its measure. I have been examining my relations to proper orthodoxy more carefully of late than I had done before, and the result is a double surprise; in the discovery, first, that I am so much nearer to real orthodoxy than I supposed, and secondly, that the New England theology, so called, is so much farther off. Indeed, I am ready, for once, to venture a prophecy,—one, too, which I suppose will seem to many quite incredible, viz.,—that when the smoke of this present commotion is blown away, and the noise of it is succeeded by the silence of reason, I shall be found, in the book you are examining, to stand in much better keeping with the orthodoxy of the Reformation, connected with the previous times reaching back to the Nicene era, than do the teachers generally and the

current opinions of New England. I only hope that the deviations I profess will suffice to prevent my being enrolled as one of the champions of orthodoxy; for I distaste even the word, as a word that is characteristically unchristian. It presents an issue, not of truth but of opinion, representing, as the word signifies on its face, that opinion may be a fit standard of Christian straitness or correctness; which, I do not hesitate to say, is a plain affront to that first and fundamental principle of the Christian doctrine, which disallows the test of mere natural judgment or opinion, and refers all truth to its final adjudication before the higher court of faith and spiritual discernment.

It can not be denied that religious opinions, apart from the realizations of faith, are a matter of grave importance. But there is like to be little straightness in them, till the obliquities of sin begin to be straightened by a regenerate experience. And for just this reason, I suppose it is, that the Scriptures omit even to name orthodoxy or straight opinion at all; deeming it enough to insist that we walk straight-footedly in the gospel of truth, (Gal. ii. 14,) and make straight paths of self-sacrifice and duty to accommodate the lameness of our feet, (Heb. xii. 3;) on the wise principle, I suppose, that, being cleared of our prejudices and the obliquities of passion, having a single eye that looks right on, and living in a life of simple trust and devotion to the will of God, we have that which is better, in fact, than argument, to straighten our opinions; for the head will never stumble if the feet do not.

Doubtless it were pleasant enough to be accounted

orthodox by my brethren, if by that means I may have their confidence; but I think God will assist me, for the few years that remain, to suffer any judgment they are pleased to hold, if only I can find and maintain the truth. In this matter of orthodoxy, Baxter holds, I think, the true doctrine, when he says:

“The reputation of it is a thing that we must deny ourselves in. For it commonly falls out in most of the world, that the thing itself and the reputation of it are inconsistent, and no man can be orthodox, and of the right religion, but he must be taken to be heterodox, and of the wrong religion. * * * The name of heresy will stand with the special love of God, yet heresy itself he utterly abhors. And whether do you think it better to part with truth and the favor of God with it, or with the name and reputation of truth, while we keep both truth and the favor of God? Deny yourselves, then, even as to the reputation of faith and orthodoxness.”—(*Practical Works, fol. III., pp. 409–10.*)

LANGUAGE AND DOCTRINE.

A SINGLE principle, distinctly apprehended and carefully traced, will be found to comprise all that is peculiar in the views presented in my book. In this principle you have a key to my real meaning, and without this principle constantly held in mind, and applied as a key, my language will only lead you into impressions which are totally remote from my real sentiments. The principle is this :

THAT ALL RELIGIOUS TRUTH, AS WELL THEOLOGICAL AS PRACTICAL, IS AND MUST BE PRESENTED UNDER CONDITIONS OF FORM OR ANALOGY FROM THE OUTWARD STATE.

The truth-feeling power of the soul may have truth present immediately to it, or may directly intuit truth, without symbols or representations of language. But the moment it will think discursively, or represent to another any subject of thought, that subject must be clothed in forms that are only signs or analogies, and not equivalents of the truth. Even definitions and the most abstract modes of terminology will be true only in a sense more or less visibly formal and analogical. They will carry their sense, not by simple notation, as in arithmetic or algebra, but as offering it to the critical power of the eye and heart in symbols naturally expressive.

Assuming, or having established this position concerning language, the person of Christ, the trinity, the atonement, and other great truths of revelation, must be taken

as offered to us under the conditions and laws of expression or simple presentation, as a soul is expressed or presented in a face, and not as in the formula of a merely logical calculus,—interpreted and not overlaid by constructive judgments. My conviction is, that all our difficulties and controversies, in respect to these great truths of revelation, are caused by a misuse of the material offered us. The truth is given us in forms or images naturally expressive; we take these forms to be the very truths themselves, and immediately begin to reason upon them by constructive, or by what are sometimes called, though improperly, *a priori* judgments. They are *a priori* in pretense or appearance, but in fact are only mock uses of this method of reasoning, having no basis in the real truth of the premise, but only a plausible show of reason in the *form* of the premise.

This, I conceive, is the almost universal sin that infests the reasonings of mankind concerning moral and spiritual subjects, and it is this at which I aimed in the deprecations of logic, or the logical method, that are offered here and there in my book. It was not my design to make an assault upon logic itself as a science. I was not ignorant that all the sublime results of the calculus are fruits of genuine logic. I only meant that, as soon as we carry this method into moral and religious philosophy, and subject our mind to it as a dominant influence there, we are sure to be enveloped in sophistries without end or limit; for words, in this case, have a wholly different relation to their truths—a relation of form or symbol, and not of mere notation. We must hold them in a way of inspection; we must read them by looking in their faces,

as we do our friends. We can not take them into our logical understanding and use them as the terms of a calculus. What they carry into our soul's feeling or perception, or awaken in it by expression, is their only truth, and that is a simple internal state of the soul itself; which if we undertake to handle in any merely logical and a priori method, we are sure to abuse both ourselves and it. And it is by just this abuse of Scripture, reasoning out of its forms, and supposing that we reason out of the truth itself, that theology is made to wear a look of confusion so unrespectable. The free symbols of expression clash, as symbols, with each other, and then we take them all as so many centers of logical systems, piling up, age upon age, our Babels of wisdom, confounding worse and worse the language of the skies, till the power of mutual understanding, and even the sense of community in the *truth*, appear to be lost.

Let me illustrate what is intended in these suggestions by a few examples. See how the Romish church establishes one of her infallible world-renowned dogmas. "Is not Jesus," she asks, "God?" "Yes, certainly." "Is not Mary the mother of Jesus?" "Yes." "What, then, is Mary but the Mother of God?—AVE MARIA! Be it henceforth a doctrine of the church, publish it, require it of all people to worship Mary the Mother of God!" Now, in just this manner, a great part of the scholastic theology, nay, of all theology, down to Liberal Christianity itself, is created. By the same false method, we are continually trying all the great questions that pertain to God's being and the work of human salvation.

Do you ask why false,—where is the fault of the argu-

ment? There is no fault in the argument, I answer, regarding simply the logic of it. The premises are true, and who will say that the result does not follow? It only happens that the premises are not true, save in a sense so far qualified as to take away the conclusion. Mary is not the mother of Jesus in the same sense that the word *mother* has in its ordinary use. She is only the visible instrument of a Transcendent Power, who is employing her as the medium by which He will graft into human history what is *not* of it, and will be really grafted into it only so far as to answer certain purposes of expression. Neither is Jesus God in any such sense that the name *Jesus* measures God; he is the Word made flesh. His person is representatively God, and not God in the inclusive logical sense that he is the All of God. And so the infallible conclusion, that Mary is the Mother of God, vanishes, the moment we look into the simple truth of expression that lies in the premises. It turns out, after all, that she is simply God's instrument in the very mysterious matter of the incarnation—a mother just so far as the mysterious person, called Jesus, is *of* her.

Our Unitarian friends sometimes drag us into a revolting conclusion, derived from the death of Christ, in the same manner. "Christ," you say, "is God. You also say that Christ died. What, then, do you believe and teach but that God died?" A most stringent argument, we sometimes acknowledge on our side, (as our accepted theologic method too generally requires,) and therefore, to show that we can take the conclusions of logic manfully, we translate them directly into verse ourselves, and sing—

"When God the mighty Maker died."

And yet there are few, I suspect, who do not feel, however confident of the good logic they are singing in this line, that the words do still grate a little upon the nerves and have a rather unpleasant sound to the ear. Hence they are more generally denied as being no part of orthodox truth. For, continuing still the same logical method, most of our theologians say that, in the death of Christ, it was only the man or human part that died. Yes, and other men have died in great numbers. If the person of Christ is thus to be divided, and the death thrown upon the human side, in order to slip a logical difficulty, then let the conclusion be logically taken that, as the world is redeemed by the death of Christ, it is redeemed by the death of a man!

Would it not be as well to let go the method of the calculus here, and look simply to what God will express to us in and through these forms of mystery—to follow the incarnate Word in the charities of his life and the patience of his suffering death, and drink, in all, that which is the truth of all, the manifested love and patience of God—a Spirit incomprehensible, and so entirely remote from any terms of sense, that to be set forth or incarnated in such terms, involves a union of the incompatible, and a defiance of all logical constructions?

Again: the "begotten, not made," of the Nicene Council, or what is commonly called the doctrine of "eternal generation," may be given as an illustration or example of the same false method. Holding, as it seems to me, a generally and radically true idea of the Sonship of Christ, the method of the Council was itself a virtual or potential falsity, apart from their meaning; and the

manner and form of their doctrine represented the falsity of their method. They laid hold of the Scripture phrases, "Son," "begotten," "only begotten"—figures of rhetoric, even transcendently poetical—and squared them down into a solid block of science, requiring them, for the ages to come, to support the dull questions of the school, and be handled, as they must, by those who know how to draw inferences about begetting and being begotten.

Then followed what only could; for there is this happy fatality, if it should not rather be called virtue, in the dialectic or false method of which I speak, that it is under a doom of the Almighty, which requires it to be the inevitable and faithful avenger of its own sins. Never has it set up a doctrine, never has it imparted any element, whether of substance or form, to a doctrine, which it was not also doomed to assault and exterminate. It perpetuates the fable of Thyestes feasting on the body of his son.

There must have been some feeling, I think, in those who first conceived and asserted the doctrine of eternal generation that, however well reasoned or true it might be, as regards the matter, the form of it was yet a violence put upon the language of Scripture. The Scripture figures, "begotten," "only begotten"—representing to us, in a way of poetic life and expression, the mutual inbeing of Christ in the flesh and the unseen God, suggesting the essential divine eminence and underived derivation of the Son, and commending his dearness to us by the sign of his filial dearness to the Father,—these living words they are found converting into a dead timber of dogma; which dogma, though it be true, as it is really meant, they must

yet have some suspicion is only as good as false, because of the form. And this the slow but certain vengeance of history will, at last, make evident. By and by some one will dare to ask what feeling is freshened, or thought fructified, or desire of wisdom comforted, by the perfectly barren information that Christ is the Son by the eternal generation of the Father? The original idea or meaning of the dogma, unable to live in a form so badly violated, will have gradually perished, and its truth will begin to be tried, not by its meaning, but by logical inferences put upon the words; and so it will, at last, be quite overturned by the same false method under which it was originally shaped.

In just this manner it is, I conceive, that the dogmas of "eternal generation" and "eternal procession" have so generally fallen out of the world's faith. Even where they are professed, they seem to be only timidly held, or half believed. And, what is a yet more convincing token of their complete discontinuance of life, they are rejected with as little insight as they are held. Thus our own Dr. Emmons, for example, reduces them, at once, by his infallible logic, to a plain absurdity, as affirming a derived existence in the Son and the Spirit. "They set the Son," he declares, "as far below the Father as a creature is below the Creator; and the Holy Ghost as far below the Son as he is below the Father; or rather, they make the Holy Ghost the creature of a creature."—(*Emmons' Works*, Vol. IV., p. 114.)

Now, the only force in this argument consists in the fact that it does not go behind the words "generation" and "procession" to ask what they mean. It takes them

as a calculus, and reasons on their forms apart from their meaning, returning the false method by which they were originally converted into logical abstractions upon its own head. Had this venerable teacher been as careful to ascertain what is meant by words as he was keen to draw inferences from them, he might often have lost, as here, the opportunity of his inferences altogether. For, as a matter of history, nothing is more clear than that the terms, "generation" and "procession," were resorted to for the very purpose of preparing a scheme of trinity that should exclude the Arian notions of a created or derivative existence in the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And here, in the fate of this particular doctrine or dogma, you have, in small, a good illustration of all the wars of theology. We can not allow the Christian truth to hold those forms which are necessary to its expression; we must be more scientific; we must convert the forms into abstractions, overlay the abstractions with logical inferences, build the inferences into schemes and systems, and these we call doctrine or theology. Nothing was ever able to stand that was built in this way; but there is one remarkable advantage accruing to comfort us, that in so many dialectic buildings and destructions, our mind is sharpened, by what we suffer, to a closer, keener inspection of the forms of truth, and gradually convinces itself, by its own miscarriages, that real truth is to be found only by insight, and never by the extempore clatter of logical judgments. We seem, in this manner, to be gravitating slowly toward the true position. Perhaps we shall sometime reach a point where God can teach us.

By these illustrations, the ground I wish to vindicate, in respect to language and doctrine, will be somewhat cleared, I trust, to your apprehension. I mean to say that words, and especially the words of revelation, which represents the invisible to us under conditions of form and symbol, (this is the very idea of revelation,) must be taken as the images or investitures of truth, offered to us in a way of expression simply; that when they are taken as terms of absolute notation, and reasoned from or with, no respect being had to their expression,—as when it is proved that Mary is the Mother of God, or that God died in the crucifixion of Jesus,—they only delude us the more certainly, the more confidently, and even the more correctly and logically, they are used; also, that when we set forth a real truth in Scripture terms that do not properly contain it, save as we argue them into it by an abuse of their nature as instruments or images of simple expression, the mistake is, at bottom, the same, and a similar delusion will follow, as in the dogmas of the “eternal generation” and “procession.”

What I have advanced on this subject of language and doctrine, in my book, appears to have disturbed the confidence of many, as indicating a licentious spirit, or a willingness to break down the outworks of theology. They do not seem to be aware that others have been equally licentious, without incurring any similar suspicion. There may be something peculiar in the manner by which I have traced the origin and illustrated the necessary defects of spiritual language; and yet the general view that I have given of language as an instru-

ment of doctrine,—its formal character, its liability to abuse, the certainty that any revelation in the outward forms of things, whether in verbal language or not, must involve apparent contrarities, which a merely formal and constructive logic will be sure to carry into conclusions as various and repugnant as the forms, raising up as many hostile sects or parties,—this truth has been embraced by others, in the past ages, as decidedly as by me, and has entered into their forms of doctrine in the same manner. It was precisely this, according to Neander, that distinguished the Nicene school from the Arian. The latter was logical and metaphysical, going directly into the essence of God and Christ as subjects of human investigation. But, in the view of the former, “all human expressions of God were of a symbolic nature, taken from temporal things, and therefore liable to be misconceived, unless the idea lying at the bottom were freed from the elements of time and sense.”—(*Vol. II., p. 381.*) Neander even gives it as a distinction pertaining to the whole class of “doctrinal writers, whose views were shaped by the Platonic philosophy, that there was no possible form of knowing which *comprehended the essence of divine things, but only a symbolical knowledge of them for the human understanding.*”—(*Vol. II., p. 400.*)

And this, which, in his view, had force enough to distinguish one great class of teachers from another,—the spiritual and true, in great part, from the merely speculative and heretical,—is precisely what I have asserted in my doctrine of language. It is, in fact, the radical sin of all my heresies.

But we have examples closer at hand, under names

greatly revered by us all, and never suspected of radical unsoundness in doctrine. I find many passages, for example, in Baxter, which indicate an opinion of the insufficiency of dogma, or of language as the instrument of dogma, entirely coincident with the views I have advanced. He does not appear to have understood, as accurately as he might have done, the grounds and causes of this insufficiency; but the fact itself, and even the necessity of multiplied and formally repugnant terms to help out the insufficiency of language, he well understands, and states in the most explicit manner. This will appear in the passage that follows.

“And the narrowness of man’s mind and thought is such, that usually there must be many partial conceptions to one thing or object really indivisible. So that few things, or nothing rather, in the world is known to us with one conception, nor with a simplicity of apprehension answerable to the simplicity of the thing. And hereby it cometh to pass that inadequate conceptions make up a great part of our learning and knowledge. And yet worse, our words being narrower than our thoughts, we are fain to multiply words more than conceptions, so that we shall have ten conceptions, perhaps, of one thing, and twenty words, perhaps, for those ten conceptions: And then we grow to imagine the things to be as various as our conceptions, yea, and our words.”
—(*Practical Works, fol., Vol. IV., p. 500.*)

In his “Dying Thoughts,” where his soul is laboring much to conceive the better state of the glorified, he adverts, again and again, to the want we suffer of some fit

medium for truth, in the use of which our half-seeing and the sickening controversies of our childish state will come to a full end. He does not reject systematic theology, but he perceives, in the clearest manner, how very little real truth there may be in it, in its most orthodox forms, and how easy it may be to place it between the soul and every thing that can be called true knowledge. He says:

“There is a great difference between that light which sheweth us the *thing itself*, and that artificial skill by which we have right *notions, names, definitions, and fancied arguments and answers to objections*. This *artificial, logical, organical kind of knowledge*, is good and useful in its kind, if right, like speech itself. But he that hath much of this may have little of the former, and unlearned persons, that have little of this, may have more of the former.”—(*Practical Works, Vol. III., p. 862.*)

In the passage that follows, he declares the sense he has of the indeterminateness of language; his belief that language most familiar and supposed to be most exactly literal and definite is commonly least understood; and also that a thorough investigation of controversies, descending into the terms in issue, would show them to be really idle, for the most part, and insignificant quarrels about forms and shadows.

“And so lamentable is the case of all mankind, by the imperfections of human language, that those words which are invented for communication of conceptions are so little fitted to their use as rather to occasion misunderstandings and contentions; there being scarce a word that hath not *many significations*, and that needeth not *many more*

words, to bring us to the true notice of the speaker's mind. * * * Some readers or hearers, yea, almost all, are so used to unapt words and notions obtruded on mankind by the master of words, that they can not understand us if we change their terms and offer them fitter, and yet *least understand* those which they think that *they best understand*. * * * A man that resolveth not to be deceived by ambiguous words, and maketh it his first work, in all his readings and disputings, to difference between *words* and *sense* and *things*, and strictly to examine each disputed term, till the speaker's meaning be distinctly known, will see the lamentable case of the church and all mankind, and what shadows of knowledge deceive the world, and in what useless dreams the greater part of men, yea, of learned men, do spend their days. Much of that which some men unweariedly study and take to be the honor of their understandings and their lives, and much of that which multitudes place their piety and hopes of salvation in, being a mere game at words and useless notions, and as truly to be called vanity and vexation, as is the rest of the vain shew that most men walk in."—(*Practical Works*, Vol. III., p. 882.)

In the passages that follow, he perceives the imperfection of all abstractive knowledge; how it lies, when we think not of it, in "forms," "images," or "secondary notions," which are only shadows of the truths signified; how, also, by a logical handling of such terms, we are generally drawing ourselves quite away from the truth, when, if we were less ambitious of science, and more ready to offer the "intuiting" eye of faith to the same themes, we

should know them more perfectly, and in a manner of virtual agreement. He is only mistaken in referring the difficulty that besets our abstractive knowledges and logical deductions to our being in the body. It lies rather in the fact that our words are in the body themselves.

"It is not improbable that there is more imperfection in this mode of *notional, organical, abstractive* knowledge which the soul exerciseth in the body, than most consider of. * * * I am very suspicious that the body is more a lantern to the soul than some will admit, and that this *Lusus notionum secundarum*, or *abstractive knowledge* of things, by *organical images, names, and notions*, is occasioned by the union of the soul with the body *ut formæ*, and is that childish knowledge which the apostle saith shall be done away. And how much man's fall might consist in such a knowing of good and evil I can not tell, or in the over-valuing of such a knowledge. And I think that, when vain philosophy, at Athens, had called the thoughts and desires of mankind from great realities to the *logical* and *philological* game at words and notions, it was Socrates' wisdom to call them to more concerning studies, and Paul's greater wisdom to warn men to take heed of such vain philosophy, and to labor to know God, and Jesus Christ, and the things of the Spirit, and not to over-value this ludicrous, dreaming, worldly wisdom."—(*Practical Works, Vol. III., p. 891.*)

"As to the *kind* of knowledge, how excellent and more satisfactory a way will that of *intuition* or *intellective sense* be, than is our present way of *abstraction, similitudes, and signs*. We often get but a set of words to take up

our time and divert us from the matter. Even as carnal men use the creatures which signify God and are made to lead them up to him, to entangle them and be the greatest and most pernicious diversion of their souls from God, so do too many learned men do by their *organical, signal* knowledge. * * * *Men take their spectacles instead of eyes.*

“And hence come the greatest part of the contentions of the world, which are hottest among men that most pretend to wordy knowledge. * * * This game at words is but a knowing of *images, signs* and *shadows*, and is but an *image* and *shadow* of true knowledge.”—(*Practical Works, Vol. III., pp. 892–3.*)

Baxter's views of language, and of abstractive knowledge or theory, as given in these numerous extracts, might be confirmed by many references. I give but one. A writer of our own time, who is held in the highest repute as a teacher of Christian truth, undertakes a subject lying in the same field, viz., “The Physical Theory of Another Life;” and advances sentiments yet more closely coincident with the views of language I have suggested. He speaks, in the same manner, of language as being only a physical medium, and expresses the same conviction of its utter incompetency to answer any purposes of exact science, in matters of spiritual philosophy and Christian theology. He says :

“The vocabulary of a highly civilized people, as of the Greeks, Romans, Italians, Germans, English, including the inflexions employed in its combinations, and including also technical terms and proper names, must, at an average, be estimated as comprising two hundred

thousand arbitrary signs, [arbitrary mostly in the sounds, but, as regards the types of the words, built on correspondences or analogical forms that are native in the creation of God, perhaps eternal in the Word,] and a large proportion of these are susceptible, in construction, of very many variations in meaning; so as, in fact, nearly to double [more likely to quintuple] the number of sounds to which distinct ideas are attached. And yet this vast apparatus, taken in its most refined form, is found, in relation to the occasions of the mind, to be scanty, rude, impliable, inexact, and poor—it is nothing better than a *material machinery*; but matter falls vastly short of being commensurable with mind. Whether regarded as the instrument of silent and solitary thought, or as the medium of communication between mind and mind, language proves itself so inadequate to some of the purposes to which it is applied, as to *forbid the hope* that those sciences will ever reach a permanent and indisputable state, which depend upon it as their only means of expression.”—(*Physical Theory*, p. 96.)

He anticipates accordingly a new and more immediately “intellectual” language in the future life, which is not derived from “sensible objects,” and then, as a consequence of this more perfect medium :—

“The superseding of all fluctuating systems of metaphysics and theology, the exclusion of needless and fruitless altercations on such subjects, and the gradual accumulation and consolidation of an ABSOLUTE PHILOSOPHY—metaphysical, theological, and moral.”—(*Physical Theory*, p. 100.)

Now, the most remarkable difference between what I

have said on the subject of language and scientific or constructive theology, and what appears in the writings of Baxter and Taylor, thus referred to, is that I am endeavoring to effect some just and practical recognition *here* of the same defects which they discover so clearly, when they look away and begin to imagine the sublime advantages of a better state of being; and that they are able to predict, with so great confidence, a new kind of medium, or language, that will be provided for the glorified hereafter. I am not sure of this. To speak frankly, I suspect the soundness of such anticipations. Is it even a reasonable supposition that we are passed through this life-long drill in forms and images, to have all our exercise superseded or quite thrown away; or shall we rather believe that we are practiced in this manner, as in others, for the future benefits and uses of the practice? Perhaps it is *one of the highest errands of our life to learn the method of finding truths in their forms*; to learn how easy it is, by a false use of words, to fill our minds with the most contradictory and mischievous errors; to be practiced and established in that simple and delicately ingenuous use that reads all truths in the faces and signs of things that reveal them. Possibly this will be the crowning distinction of heavenly minds, that they are able to read God's eternal language without mistake or hindrance; for (I can not but suspect that there is an eternal and necessary connection between the *forms* God has wrought into things,—thus into language,—and the contents, on the one hand, of his own mind, and the principles, on the other, of all created mind.) However this may be, would it not be more modest, and far more practical, instead of flying to the

heavens to be emancipated from what God has given us here, to return again to our words and our signs, and ask if, possibly, there may not be some better, more legitimate and honest use of them, by which we may know more and pretend less, have more to communicate, and less of strife and judgment?

This certainly has been my conviction. I had no such thought as that I was making light of truth, and reflecting distrust and discouragement on reasonable and proper efforts to find the truth. I supposed, rather, that I was showing how we may open a wider heaven of truth than our own or all mere formulas and abstractions could possibly contain. I supposed that I was showing how a suspension of our intensely dogmatizing habit; how the ceasing to be busied *about* and *upon* truth, as a dead body offered to the scalpels of logic, and the giving ourselves to truth as set before us in living expression, under God's own forms, yielding them a pure heart in which to glass themselves, would fill us evermore with senses of God and his truth otherwise unattainable. I supposed that, if we can but quit our over-theoretic and abstractive wisdom, make a great deal less of the plausible ingenuities of system, be simple enough to think more of receiving and less of constructing, and to offer a living ingenuous heart to what God *expresses* to us, we should be no longer drawn off into petty formulas, to fight for the mere *minima* of truth, arrayed as in starvation against each other, but should receive so much more of God's fullness, and spread ourselves in such a breadth of comprehension as to find the unity, whose loss we deplore, in simply receiving truths whose loss was unknown,—

hidden from us, by the party zeal we had for systems that contained only a few small segments or specks of truth.

Language is not an instrument so imperfect, when rightly accepted, or used according to its real nature. If, instead of occupying our "dying thoughts," and our conceptions of "another life," with conjectures of some better medium that will deliver us from the obscurity and limitation of this, we could simply turn ourselves to the practical question, by what abuses and perversions we become involved in so great confusion of doctrine, and reduce ourselves to so great poverty in the truth, we should discover that there is truth enough to be known here, and truth enough expressed,—only provided we had eyes to see it. Nay, if there be any advantage to accrue from a change of worlds, we should begin to suspect that it will be found, not so much in better media, as in a more sensible and proper use. The principal difficulty we have with language now is, that it will not put into the theoretic understanding what the imagination only can receive, and will not open to the head what the heart only can interpret. It is a great trouble with us that we can not put a whole scheme of redemption, which God could execute only by the volume of expression contained in the life and death of his incarnate Son, into a theologic formula or article of ten words. It is as if, being unable to compress the whole tragic force of Lear into some one sentence of Edgar's gibberish, we lose our patience, and cry out upon the poverty of language and conception in the poem. Let us only take the attitude of reception; let us cease from our foolish

endeavor to make universes of truth for God out of a few words and images that we have speculated into wise sentences; and then turning to his own living forms of expression, brought forth in Scripture and the world and Providence, set ourselves before them as interpreters and learners, with an imagination that is open, and a living and believing heart; we shall then begin to feel that there is abundance of language here, and that, too, which is abundantly significant. If our theology is dull and partial, if we long after a future state where "intuitions" will give us something better than "notions," and "names," and "shadows," we need the transfer after all, not so much to get a new language, as to get away from our own abuse of the language we have. To see God in those things wherein he sets himself before us is the way of intuition, and we need not go to heaven for that; for it is the essential beatitude of "the pure in heart" that "they shall see God" here, as often as they look for Him, and without a change of worlds.

I was well aware that the views of language expressed in my book would be generally looked upon as fantastic and extravagant. And now that I am called to answer for them, what shall I say? That I can not verify them to you by a re-statement, or by any mere argument or exposition that will operate conviction as an immediate present effect, I certainly know. I do not see that they can prove their truth to others in any different way, or by any more summary process, than that under which they were gradually, and, by imperceptible degrees, verified to me; that is, by an habitual study and close obser-

vation of the nature and phenomena of language continued for a course of years. It is my misfortune that I can offer you no justification that is more immediate, than to put you off thus upon time, for that which is the necessary matter of your present judgment; and yet I have a certain confidence that, as I go on to sketch the process by which these views of language were verified to me, a suspicion may, at least, be fastened, that the process described is likely to result in the same manner with others. You will find that it has, to a certain extent, resulted thus with you all, and, with some of you, nearly or quite to the extent, perhaps, even of my heresy itself. Or, if it be otherwise, let it not be deemed arrogant in me that I assume so much, in proposing to be a guide and teacher to others; for it commonly happens that we, like other children, have each of us our special fields and ways of exercise, and it is no very offensive assumption, that one child seems to be forward in the play that other and stronger children have neglected. I suggest, then, as a

First condition, if any one will come into, or effectually test the views of language I have published, that he make large and patient observations of the analogy that holds between the two worlds of matter and mind; not omitting to notice, also, and record what impressions of this analogy have been forced upon the observing and thoughtful spirits of mankind in the former ages. When I affirm that moral and spiritual truths are communicated and communicable, only under conditions of form or analogy, the declaration supposes a certain correspondence between objects and terms of the outward

state, and whatever subjects of thought, feeling, and spiritual being, we may speak of; that the world of space and time is a medium to the world of mind; that what exists, in form, is prepared, by a certain mysterious and perfectly uninvestigable relationship, to represent what is out of form. We live in the visible; we speak, reason, worship, in terms that are of the visible. And if any revelation is made to us, it is made, of course, in terms or images of the outward state; which, in virtue of some law of correspondence or analogy, are suggestive or expressive of the truths revealed.

Thus Paul, taking notice of this same analogy, says: "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and God-head;" in which, as I understand him, he not only expresses his conviction that the forms of the world do, in fact, represent the nature and power of God, but he also argues *to* that fact from the manifest necessity that, if the creation of the world be issued from God, it must represent the mind by which it is conceived, and must, in all its particular forms or objects, reveal those archetypes of thought in God which shaped them in their birth. He discovers, also, the same analogy pervading the outward Providential history of past times, and especially that of the Jewish state, as a frame of supernatural order and appointment: "Now, all these things happened unto them," he says, "for ensamples, [*types* in the original,] and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Not that we are to look for the same outward discipline, but for

one that is spiritually correspondent ; to see, in the terms of their history, types or analogies of that spiritual discipline, by which God is exercising us. So the tabernacle and the rites of the altar are declared to be copies of "patterns seen in the mount," which, being familiarized in the outward state, are ready to serve as types or figures of the spiritual grace or work of Christ, which is "the true tabernacle." In like manner, the unseen felicities of the future life are set forth, or pictured to us, by means of visible images, drawn from the worlds above us and the world about us, which, as types of paradise, are set to overhang and surround every moment of our mortal life. Holy Scripture, in fact, is only a gradual unrolling or spiritualizing to us of figures and forms that envelop and represent the deeper truths of the spiritual life.

Nor is it only the extreme mystic interpreters, such as Swedenborg and Origen, that discover this correspondence or analogy, and who bring it into discredit, by asserting a precisely threefold meaning in the words of Scripture, and other like fancies. It is apprehended, also, by the insight of poets and philosophic observers, not only as pertaining to the Scripture forms, but to every thing in the outward state. "The severe schools," says Sir Thomas Brown, "shall never laugh me out of the philosophy of Hermes, that this visible world is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a portrait, things are seen, not truly, but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some more real substance in that invisible fabric." And it is remarkable that this Egyptian Hermes, to whom he refers, and who is computed to have

lived even twenty centuries before Christ, was able, in the depths of nature, and apart from the aids of revelation, to verify it as a truth, that "all things which are in heaven are in the earth, after an earthly manner; and all which are in the earth are in heaven, [the world of thought and spirit,] after a celestial manner." The same general truth, under a different form, was maintained by Plato, when he represented that all visible things are the outward birth of intellectual types or thoughts represented in them. So when Kepler, gazing at the sky and beholding the starry motions fulfilling his conjectured law, exclaimed, in the sacred furor of his enthusiasm, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee!"—it was only a more inspired utterance of the same conviction; for there is an inner light of divine thought, which informs, not only objects, but laws, and which, if we can find it, is expressed in all things. This sublime conviction it was, too, that had penetrated the soul of Milton, when he wrote—

"What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein,
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought."

The distinguished teacher of natural history, Mr. Kirby, is led into the same conviction, by an approach also from that quarter, declaring his conviction that nature is a "system of representation; * * * the Great Instructor of man placing this world before him as an open, though mystical, book, in which the different objects are words of a language, from the study of which he might be instructed in such truths, relating to the spiritual world, as God saw fit to reveal."

Now, in what I have advanced on the subject of language and the revelation of God, I have simply said that both are possible, only on the ground of this vast, original and truly Sacred Analogy between things visible and invisible; and that all the terms of language, in which thoughts and spiritual truths are presented, all the instruments of expression by which God is set before men, must be taken out of the world of form, and will offer truth and God to us only under analogies or conditions of form. The revelation, I have said, whether it be a proposition of language, a vision, a burning bush, or a divine life in the flesh, will have something in it which puts it under the conditions of form, and something which pertains to its intellectual and spiritual significance. And then the account must ever be liquidated between what belongs to the form and what to the significance; also, between different or antagonistic forms; constant care being had not to manufacture truth by inferences drawn out of the forms, but to find truth in them by a simple and delicately receptive contemplation of them, or insight of what they express. For the forms will probably support or suffer many hundred inferences that have nothing to do with the truths they are intended to signify, and which only a sharpened insight will accurately distinguish. Accordingly, it follows that the best and truest doctrine will not be that which is settled by the logical faculty, exercised in building single forms into systems—which, in general, are only single forms swollen in dimensions, by absorbing or swallowing all the contiguous forms that were given to qualify, limit, fill and settle their meaning,—but it will be that which a soul, purified and cleared by

love, discovers under manifold terms of analogy, when it turns itself to the receiving of God through simple contemplation, perusing the faces of those words and symbols by which he is expressed. Christian truth is received, not constructed; spiritually discerned, but judged of no man. It is found, not by things done over and about it, or by the logical drawing and quartering of its dead body, but by being found of it and having it enter into us alive, in its divinity, to be our life. The true interpreter is love—the love, that is, which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost: “he that loveth knoweth God, for God is Love.”

Secondly, there needs to be a careful revision of the distinction between literal and figurative language. I have virtually denied this distinction as commonly held, insisting that we have no properly literal language, save in reference to matters of the outward physical state. When we come into the world of mind or spirit, words get their significance, I have insisted, under conditions of analogy, and never stand as a direct and absolute notation for thought.

This truth, I was well aware, could not be assented to, save by the few who have found it, or made a gradual and complete verification of it, by a course of protracted exercise; for it is only by years of patient exercise in the study and observation of words, having the attention always directed to this one point, that the universal presence of the form-element can become an accepted, obvious, and natural truth. The first impression of intelligent persons is likely to be that of the rhetoricians, viz., that we have

two departments of language in reference to spiritual truths, a "literal" and a "figurative;" or, if the view I have given of the origin of language, as based in physical terms or images, is acknowledged to be true, still it will be said that words have lost the recollection mostly of their original symbols, and have settled down, under long use, to be exact names of well-known spiritual ideas. And thus, it will be imagined that we have a language provided for spiritual ideas, which is as truly literal as that which we employ in the naming of physical objects.

Now, it is very true that the original base, or etymon, of many words is lost, and that of others doubtful. It is equally true that familiarity has given us a certain fluency in the use of many words of thought, which, if we do not pause too long upon them, or question them too deliberately, are very likely to seem even literal names and exact measures of the thoughts they are used to convey. But all such impressions wear away by degrees, and disappear, when we set ourselves to a closer observation of the phenomena of words; till finally we discover that the words, in respect to which there seemed to be such a definite and precise understanding, and which therefore we had taken to be literal names of the thoughts signified, are in fact only more, because more latently, indeterminate.

Thus you will observe, for example, that a theologian, strongly confident of the certainty and real science of his operations, will gather up a glowing mass of popular, half-contradictory figures in the scripture, relating to or lying about some common subject, and bringing them

into a single abstract proposition, will say, 'their meaning, or the sum of their meaning, is exactly this.' His conception will be that he has reduced all their ambiguities, and given their precise literal import. And yet a closer examination will discover what is exactly contrary, viz., that his proposition is as really and more abstrusely figurative, and far more uncertain in its meaning than any of the figures condensed and represented in it. Nay, the truth itself of his proposition will be found to consist in the fact that it is just ambiguous enough to let in all the real ambiguities of those figures and phrases taken together.

Just here is the fruitful source of imposture in theology. Reducing the truth of scripture into forms of abstract statement, under figures so effectually staled by time and familiarity that they seem, instead, to be literal and exact names of the ideas intended, it calls the product certainty; not perceiving that the appearance of certainty in which it rejoices is produced by simply doubling the uncertainty; that is, by having still on hand all the original uncertainty, and having it hidden from its own discovery. It supposes that generalities are most definite, because poetic form and figure are less palpable in them; whereas, the language that is most palpably figurative is generally more determinate and clear, and, as a matter of fact, far less frequently misunderstood than that of abstractive propositions.

Thus, if you take up the abstractive language of catechism and theologic system, you will find that the staple words of which it is principally built are such as these: *Character, necessity, will, ability, dependence, influence, end,*

means, efficiency, &c. Thus, for instance, the scripture text, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him," will be set forth by some orthodox preacher as yielding the following doctrine: '*that holy character in us depends on a divine influence.*' Having cleared the palpable figures, 'come,' 'can,' and 'draw,' he will imagine that he has brought his proposition to a form whose import is perfectly certain, absolutely definite, and literal. He does not perceive or take notice, it may be, that the words *character, depends, and influence,* are as truly figures as the others, and, what is more, that these three words are among the most indefinite or indeterminate words of human language.

"CHARACTER,"—*distinctive impress, mark, or seal,*—what is the precise meaning of this image or figure, in its application to the soul? What is character of? the will, the affections, the separate acts of the soul, the outward conduct, or the inward principle? that principle a purpose, or a love, or a state? Is character shaped by the understanding, or by the inward law of its principle? Is it spontaneous, or consciously operated by choice, under motives of interest? How is it changed; by action, or faith, or both? How evidenced and tested? This word 'character' is one of the most difficult words in human language to settle any precise understanding of, and one in regard to which every ingenuous disciple will be consciously rectifying his impressions to the end of life. How great a part of the unreduceable misunderstanding between us and the Unitarians, how much of the dissonance of the Christian sects all over the world, centers just here, in the inability to conceive character in the

same way. No two individuals perfectly agree in it, no individual agrees with himself.

"DEPENDS,"—a word whose radical figure is a *hanging-from*, and which represents men as hanging from or upon God, in regard to the interest of character. This is the figure; what is the exact idea or meaning in the use now before us? How, in what respects, are we thus dependent? Is it that we simply want the will to help ourselves, or is there some disability of habit, or is there some breach of faculty under the consequences of sin? Is the disability absolute, or conditional, depending on a concurrence of God and the creature? Here, in fact, we open all the controversies of grace and free will, natural ability and moral inability—Augustine and Pelagius; Luther and Erasmus; Calvinism, Arminianism, and Romanism. To settle this idea of Christian dependence has been a tiresome and long work, and I do not perceive that it is done.

"INFLUENCE." But what do we mean, clear of ambiguity, by this figure of *in-flowing* or *flowing upon*? In the uses of common life, the word is a word of endless fluctuation, carrying all shades of meaning, between simple request or argument on one side, and those mysterious and absolute forms of control, real or unreal, on the other, denoted by the words, society, sympathy, fascination, spell, sorcery, witchcraft, magnetism. What then do we mean by divine influence? Some say at once, a divine efficiency. Some, a persuasive power. Some, an efficiency that works, in the last degree, through persuasion. Some disclaim all knowledge of what is meant by the term, save as they see the power in the

result—quoting always that very intensely figurative illustration—“the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth.” Some will imagine that there is a literal inflowing of God upon us, not remembering that this word must be a mere figure, and can be nothing else—God being in us already, in our mouth and heart, so near that he can not approach us by motion. Is it put forward then, as it properly should be, that the word ‘influence,’ in the sentence discussed, includes all that God has done, or is doing supernaturally, in Christ and the Holy Spirit, to regenerate mankind? But what has Christ done? What will the Holy Spirit do? Here opens, in fact, the whole subject of trinity, incarnation, atonement, spiritual agency, all the transcendent mysteries of the gospel. Are these mysteries cleared by the word ‘influence,’ or is it rather a word as unfathomable in its meaning as all they together?

Now, it is true enough that I should readily assent to the proposition we are discussing; because there is a certain general understanding which time has been able to produce in the members of a religious community, back of any and all mere formulas like this. And yet there are a hundred points involved in the terms of this proposition, some of them of the highest importance, in regard to which I should be altogether uncertain what the author means to say. The same would be true, only in a far more limited degree, if we had occupied the same study and lived at the same table from the time of our early youth. How much more ambiguous to Christians out of social and ecclesiastical connection, under the

drill of a different theologic method and different modes of practical life and worship.

This is a theologic illustration. Let me refer you next to one that is practical and will be equally convincing. A man brought up in orthodoxy passes, on a sudden, into the circle of Unitarianism co-existing with him in the same city. He raises the question, with a design perfectly ingenuous, "what is your religion?" Words are given him in reply that have a right sound, and yet they do not seem to stand exactly in the *modes* of use he is familiar with. They are the most literal and common words we have in the department of thought or spirit, such as he has taken to be the simplest names of ideas; but he doubts whether he understands them. What can be more familiar than such words as *right, truth, sin, love, faith, hope, duty*? But, for some reason, the words do not come into the same places, or stand in the same ranks. Something is said, every few moments, that gives the mind a shock and awakens the apprehension that a new atmosphere of meaning envelops the words. And it is even so. There is a form-element in every system of thought or doctrine, which assimilates all the words employed, insinuating into them, or imposing upon them, a character partly from itself; much as food is changed in form, when the *nisus formativus* of a living body imposes its own chemistry and requires it to fill and support its own type of growth and structure.

In the same way, every individual mind generates to itself, unconsciously, a certain general form, or whole sphere of thought; which whole, by a necessary law of the mind, called reason, [*ratio*,] exerts a latent power

over all the ratios of meaning, or relative forces of words, by which they are made to fall into their places, in the sphere or whole to which they are subordinate. Hence it frequently happens that two persons of high intelligence and vigorous activity, but working under the laws of different or dissimilar spheres, are consciously not able, when they meet, to be sure of understanding each other. The most common words seem to stand for something that can not be exactly measured. Definitions are an assistance, but only a partial one; for they themselves, also, want defining. No real and satisfactory understanding can be had between the parties, until they have felt out, each the other, so as to get possession of his whole or sphere, and come into the power of his particular words and items in the unity of his sphere. And this will never be done or effected, except under the previous condition of sympathy. No two strangers, formed in different types of life and religion, can ever understand each other, in regard to matters of spiritual thought, through the medium *simply* of words. There must be sympathy enough, yielded patiently enough, and for a time long enough, to bring one into the inward life and sphere of the other. Two mathematicians can *force* an exact mutual understanding; for their words and signs are an exact notation of the things signified. But in moral and spiritual language, however carelessly we may speak of the 'literal' senses of terms, they have nothing of the power of a notation. They are plastic, ebbing and flowing continually in the ratios of meaning they are set to fill, and the more implicitly we assume their exactness, the more certain we are to be deceived.

There is no limit to the illustrations that might be offered, to show that the assumption of a literal and perfectly fixed meaning, in the common words of language and those most fluently used, is baseless. And if any one is willing to look for it, the fact will as constantly offer itself to his discovery. Indeed, he will find that the words of thought (for I am speaking only of this department of language) most difficult to bring into any terms of definite understanding, are precisely those which have lost their bases, and become what the rhetoricians call 'literal,' in distinction from those which are 'figurative.'

Hence also it is, that nothing so much comforts our intelligence, as to see the 'literal words' married again to their types or bases, by a discovery of their etymology, and transformed back into 'figures.' We employ them now with a confidence and conscious precision, just as much advanced, as they are become less 'literal' and more 'figurative,'—reversing, in experience or experimentally, the very opinion so peremptorily set up against me, that language settles gradually into meanings that are 'literal and exact' names of thoughts. Precisely contrary to this, the more one discovers of the form-element in words, learning, meantime, to separate the form or vehicle from the truth, the more exact and consciously intelligent will his apprehensions be. He will be struck, also, by observing, at every stage, how the form of a word just discovered seems to have been with him before, by a kind of latent presence, presiding imperceptibly over the uses he made of it,—only he is now more confident than he was, and more precisely intelli-



gent in the use. Thus, if it were now, for the first time, made clear to him that the words *joy* and *exultation* denote a leaping forth, and the word *happiness* a hap, or befalling, as if some agreeable fortune, or gift, had fallen to one's possession,—one a triumphant going forth of the soul, therefore, out of its own full center; and the other a passive benefit or good luck falling in toward that center, to waken a pleasure in it that is not properly of it—he would see the distinction of these words beautifully made out, in this manner, and feel, at the same time, a certain conviction that the forms of the words had always been present, in a degree, to his uses, even when he used them more confusedly than he will hereafter.*

* I referred to the word *congress*, in my book, as an example; a word that is derived from the Latin word *gradior*, *gressus*, and denotes, originally, a *measured step*, or step of dignity. Therefore, being a word of dignity, at its very root, the word *congress*, I suggested, can not be applied as the regular name of any mob or low assemblage. Being of a high-born family, the family will have power to forbid its degradation. Not that words can not be abused or corruptly used,—they often are, especially in single cases. Sometimes they are used as *epithets* and not as *names*. Sometimes an elevated word is applied to a low subject, to raise it into decency or poetic dignity. Sometimes the very design is to excite laughter by the incongruousness of the application. What I meant was this—that the growths and compounds of a word will be so interlocked by associate meanings as to hold one another, more generally, to some perceivable connection with the original base or root. Referring to the word *grade* in the English dictionary, we find the derivatives *gradual*, *gradation*, *graduate*, in all of which, and especially the last, (as when applied to the regular spacing of a thermometer,) we distinguish the presence of the *measured step*, which is the original type of the word. Then, as the *measured step* carries or associates an esthetic element of *dignity*, we have the word *graduate*, used in reference to the *honors* of a university. Next, the word *de-grade* will appear as a word of ignominy; for since there is a latent power of dignity in *grade*, the original type, the being *put out of grade*, or *de-graded*, is not ambiguous, possibly an honor, possibly a disgrace, but certainly and necessarily the latter. Then follow the words



Thirdly: while observing, in this manner, the forms of single words, our attention may be directed, with equal profit, to a discovery of the element of form in sentences. The bases of many words are irrecoverably lost. But when this is true of all the principal words in a sentence, there will yet be some particle of relation or transition, which carries the whole idea of the sentence into a setting of form that is palpable, and through which, or under the conditions of which, it is apprehended. Thus we speak of '*faith in God*,' and if it be agreed, for illustration, that the words '*faith*' and '*God*' have sunk, and will never discover their etymology, or the bases on which they stand, still the particle *in* is a word of palpable form, and we shall find, if we narrowly inspect our consciousness, that our thought in the expression is completely immersed in form, under and by means of this little particle. We seem to go over, by a line of motion, to place our keeping *in* God, as a medium of rest or trust *out* of ourselves. So the particle *with*, in the first verse of John's gospel, places the whole sentence under a condition of form, and leaves the question of interpretation—a question here of so vast import—hanging mainly on the figure of outward local concomitancy, or juxtaposi-

egress, *ingress*, *ingredient*, and others, all with a certain quality of dignity which forbids their application, as names, to low subjects; or, what is the same, imparts an air of inflation to the style when it is done, which is itself the effectual and irresistible protest of nature. What I mean, then, is this: that the original element of *form* in a word, or family of words, commonly stays by, as in this word *congress*, regulating, though unseen, the uses to which it is applied. So that when we discover this latent form, and get possession of the original physiology of a word, we see at once what has been controlling our uses heretofore, and how the whole family of words may be used hereafter, with a more confident and conscious intelligence.

tion in space. How much, too, of what is called theology, depends on the four particles *by, through, in, to*, as used in the epistles of Paul,—words that set all the matters they connect, however spiritual, in figures of spatial relationship. To settle into these figures, so as to find their exact force, requires a spiritual training of years; and so delicate is the process that, if any one begins to act the grammarian in them, suspending his exegesis wholly on a comparison of uses; or the logician, drawing what inferences are possible or meet his convenience, from the sentences to which they impart their forms, it may generally be set down that he is preparing some trick of imposture on himself or others.

† There is no such thing, in short, as getting clear of form in human language. Whoever attempts to bring any truth out of form, into an exact, literal, abstractive language clear of form, begins in a delusion at the outset, and is very certain to be deeper in delusion at the end. And yet what immense quantities of theology are manufactured in just this way! What are called definitions in theology and metaphysics are generally nothing better than preparations for a plentiful harvest of errors—not because definitions may not be useful and are not a natural resort of intelligence, but that being commonly drawn in the most abstract language possible, they are supposed to have absolute meanings clear of form and figure; when yet they are just as truly under form and figure as the wildest rhapsodies, only that the figure has been staled by time, and is therefore less palpable. And then, after the definitions have been accepted as absolute, how many deductions, spun out of the mere forms of the

words or sentences, will be taken as the veritable sons and daughters of the truth defined. Ten or fifteen years of observation in this field will open to almost any one, I am sure, important discoveries.

Another and fourth mode of exercise, the study of religious divisions and controversies, will lead to the same general impressions. Let the intelligent Christian teacher set himself to this investigation as deliberately as the importance of the subject requires; let him open up the repugnant forms under which Christian sects or churches are fighting, each on some one side of the truth represented by his form,—angry, denunciatory, bitter, each in the compound ratio of his honesty and his ignorance of what he is doing,—then let him go into an experiment on all the forms or formulas maintained, considering what of the repugnance belongs to the mere form of the words and sentences, and what to the peculiar ratios of symbols in the mental spheres or systems of the parties; discovering in this way how generally their real or intended meanings are compatible; how necessary, often, all their conflicting representations are to a full and well-rounded Christian doctrine,—practiced in this way, he will begin to have a more exalted sense of truth, because of the controversies and contradictions maintained in its name; the boundaries of his charity will be extended, and he will be comforted in the sense of a more general fellowship and co-operation; he will think of truth with more true heart and courage, and less of that feeble anxiousness, akin to jealousy and panic, which breaks the confidence and firmness of the mind; in short, he will be

so effectually tranquilized and assured in this direction, as to regard with unaffected pity any Christian soul from whom a discovery so comfortable and fruitful is hid.

It was in this general connection that I spoke of paradox, as necessary to the full expression of truth, and in view of the same general fact that contrary forms are needed as complemental representations of truth, I also ventured, in my simplicity, to speak of being able to assent, without difficulty, to about as many creeds as chance to fall in my way. I supposed that all such, at least, as are endeavoring, in this age, to compose the strifes of the church, would receive my suggestions patiently and thoughtfully, if not with a ready assent. But I seem, instead, to have raised no thought beyond the mere outcry of alarm and judgment. I am charged with indifferentism, a willingness to trifle with the serious interests of truth, a want of intellectual integrity, and I know not what beside. It seems to be imagined that one's head must be turned by some egregious vanity, or excess of vain philosophy, to utter such licentiousness. Precisely contrary to this, I only spoke what the simplest disciples and those deepest in love have always been aptest to say, and with greatest boldness, out of their mere Christian experience. Thus, the late Dr. Simeon, than whom no man was ever more unsophisticated, or farther off from rationalism and vain philosophy, writes, in one of his letters:—

“Perhaps you little thought that, in what you have said about extremes, and against the golden mean, you would carry me along with you. But I do not only go along with you, I even go far beyond you; for to you I

can say in words, what for these thirty years I have proclaimed in deeds, (you will not misunderstand me,) that the truth is not in the middle, and not in one extreme; but in both extremes. I see you filled with amazement, and doubting whether I am sober.

"Here were two extremes; observing days, eating meats, &c. 'Paul, how do you move? In the mean way?' 'No.' 'To one extreme?' 'No.' 'How then?' 'To both extremes in their turn, as occasion requires.'

"Here are two other extremes, Calvinism and Arminianism, (for you need not be told how long Calvin and Arminius lived before St. Paul.) 'How do you move in reference to these, Paul? In the golden mean?' 'No.' 'To one extreme?' 'No.' 'How then?' 'To both extremes: to-day I am a strong Calvinist; to-morrow a strong Arminian.' 'Well, well, Paul, I see thou art beside thyself; go to Aristotle, and learn the golden mean.'

"But, my brother, I am unfortunate; I formerly read Aristotle, and liked him much; I have since read Paul, and caught somewhat of his strange notions oscillating (not vacillating) from pole to pole. Sometimes I am a high Calvinist, at other times a low Arminian; so that if extremes please you, I am your man; only remember, it is not *one* extreme that we are to go to, but *both* extremes."—(*Memoirs*, pp. 351-2.)

Such is the verdict of a man who lives in the simplicity of love and finds his wisdom there. On the contrary, there is no so disingenuous and untrustworthy soul, none so irreverent to truth, or incapable of truth, as one who is rigidly confined to the little *credo* or thimble-

measure of his own formula. What he calls consistency, means the same as a small sense of truth ; for if he had a larger sense of truth, such as a full Christian experience ought to give him, he would even want several thimbles to contain it.

Again, fifthly, it will greatly instruct any one who seeks to arrive at a proper impression of language, or of the justice of the view I have stated, simply to observe the concessions made by different writers in regard to it, when laboring earnestly in any abstruse or difficult subject. A simple hint of this nature will recall it as a kind of universal practice of writers, to deplore the indefiniteness of language in respect, each, to his particular subject or question. They have no doubt of its general exactness and sufficiency, but voting, each in his own special field of inquiry, that it is inexact and insufficient there, they are found, taken all together, voting that it is inexact and insufficient in all.

One teacher, for example, will occupy whole years in the investigation of the single word *baptism*, digging through libraries, issuing replies and rejoinders to the amount of a volume, having it, in fact, as one of the great purposes of his life, to settle the meaning of this word. But while toiling thus in heroic determination to clear the ambiguity of a word wholly external in its meaning, and relating to nothing but the mode of applying a little water to the person, he will probably be as confident of all words that relate to the infinite being and trinity of God, and to the unseen state of angels and devils, and to the effects of the cross, as a transaction of

this metropolitan speck of earth, on the moral government of God in the stellar universe of worlds, as if *baptism* were the only word of religion, or of the dictionary, that suffers a possible ambiguity.

X Not to multiply examples of this kind, which are without number, I take pleasure in referring you to one that, with a singular felicity, touches all the essential points of the doctrine of language I have endeavored to establish,—its essentially formal nature and quality; its necessary insufficiency, when applied to God and the transcendent mysteries of the divine nature; and the impossibility here of definitions that will not run, when logically treated, into conclusions that have no agreement with the truths signified. This example will be found in the introduction to an article on the "Sonship of Christ," in the "Princeton Theological Essays," republished from the Biblical Repository of 1829. The writer has here no antagonist to demolish. He has nothing on hand but a subject. The difficulties of the subject he feels, and, when he undertakes to open the truth of it, he finds himself oppressed by the essential infirmities of language. In such a case, he makes no secret of the oppression he suffers. He says:

"It will not be denied that much evil has been produced by the attempt to reduce to distinct formulas the general truths of the Bible, nor that many have been led to reject this, [the eternal Sonship,] as well as other doctrines of the word of God, from the difficulties with which they conceived the definitions of them to be encumbered."

He had just quoted with approbation, too, a German

writer, who denies the possibility of any definition of the relation of Fatherhood and Sonship, that goes beyond "the idea of *sameness of nature*,—every thing else in it, being merely human, can not be transferred to God." In which I ought most certainly to agree, and also when he concedes that "a nearer or more definite explanation of the nature of this relation can not be given, because there is nothing analogous to it among men;" or because, "at best, our analogical knowledge of God extends but a little way;" for this, it will be seen, is only another way of admitting that all the language we have for subjects of this nature is based in forms or analogies. The writer of the essay then goes on to say that all our arguments against the Sonship of Christ, however invincible in logical consequence, will be at fault, for the reason that our definitions are only feeble and obscure terms of analogy.

"It is said that the doctrine contains a contradiction in terms, that it is utterly incomprehensible how the divine essence can be communicated to the Son and yet be retained by the Father. But * * * if it be allowable to demand *how* the divine essence can be communicated from the Father to the Son and yet retained by the Father, the objector [a Trinitarian] must submit to a similar demand,—*how* three distinct persons can have the same numerical essence,—*how* God can be in heaven and on earth at the same time, and yet not partly in the one and partly in the other? It is evident that, when we speak thus, we use words nearly without meaning [say rather in glowing healthful terms of paradox]—*human language is so little adapted to the things of God, and our*

knowledge is so limited, that we may be said not to know what we say, nor whereof we affirm. When speaking of God's essence, his omnipresence, his unsuccessive, eternal existence, or mode of subsistence, our ideas are, at best, merely negative. We endeavor to deny every thing inconsistent with absolute perfection, *but we are unable to state affirmatively what we mean by any of these terms.*"

It will be difficult, I think, for you not to pity a writer who has fallen into such an abyss of negations concerning God. He is so oppressed with the sense he has of the poverty of language in respect to the matters in question, as to imagine, since he can not define and dogmatize in it, that he really does not use it with any positive or intelligent meaning,—it affirms nothing, it is all negation. Could he go a little farther, and perceive a little more adequately what language is in its true symbolic force, he would be comforted in the discovery that he really knows the more of God, and knows Him the more affirmatively and adequately, *because* he knows Him in terms that can not be defined, and in paradoxes that defy all the petty solutions of logic, or of what is called theologic science.

The objection to Christ's eternity, grounded in the supposed derivation of the Son from the Father, as implied in the doctrine of eternal generation, is answered by a similar protest against the possibility of definitions and logical deductions, and the same unforcible excusing method of reference to other difficulties, which it is insisted are just as bad. "The root," he says, "of all such objections lies in pressing the analogy between divine and human things too far. It is plain that, if it be per-

mitted to apply to God forms of expression in the same sense in which they are used among men, [that is, in the primary physiological sense of the terms,] there is *no one subject* on which we may not be involved in contradiction and absurdity. We say that the Father and Son have the same numerical essence, and yet we say that the Son became incarnate and the Father did not; that is, that the same numerical essence did and did not become incarnate. Is it not something worse than useless for us to speculate so confidently on subjects at such an infinite remove above our conceptions, and to avail ourselves, with so much confidence, of the most dangerous of all arguments, the *reductio ad absurdum*, when applied to subjects like the present? We are, however, no advocates for the definition under consideration; not because we consider the *a priori* arguments against it as just and conclusive, but because we can not find that it is founded on the clear statements of the word of God, and because we regard it as *one of the vain attempts to bring down, by formulas and definitions, the infinite mysteries of the Godhead, within the grasp of man's finite intellect.*"

Now, if there is "no one subject" pertaining to God, which does not lie within the domain, to us, of form or analogy, therefore none where, as before said, we are "able to state affirmatively what we mean;" that is, in "formulas" or "definitions" that accurately measure the truth; it is most certainly true, that there is "no one subject" of *Christian theology*, where the *reductio ad absurdum* is not a dangerous weapon, or where the "*a priori* argument is just or conclusive." Exactly this is what I have asserted in protesting against mere logic, as a test

of Christian truth. The only proper use of this kind of argument, is when it is applied as a test of method itself, as it is in my discourses on the Trinity and Atonement. There was no justice, as I well understood, in the logical *ad absurdum* argument I applied to these doctrines, save as they are supposed and taken to be doctrines out of analogy, literal and thoroughly definable dogmas. Then, having made them reveal their absurdity in this character, I immediately sought to re-produce them in another; that is, under the acknowledged conditions of form or analogy.

You will see by this rather extended reference to the Review, how readily and fully my heresy in regard to language and doctrine will be accepted, under the pressure of any great theme of religion, when no influence is present, but that of the theme itself and the demands of simple truth, to direct the action of the mind. I have never inquired and do not know who is the writer of this essay on the "Sonship of Christ," (an article, I shall by and by show you, that is involved with me also in all my principal heresies respecting God and the Trinity,) but it would not in the least surprise me to be informed that it was written by the same hand, which penned the article against my book in a recent number of the same publication.

Again: it will greatly instruct any person, as regards the true nature of language and of theologic reasonings, to be in a habit of observing the logical characters, their modes of proceeding, and the measure of their successes. I could instance many examples, more or less striking,

but a single one must suffice. We have, in New England, a writer who has been a problem, I suppose, with others, as he certainly has been to me. He is generally regarded as a man wholly separate from law, making his transitions from one post to another, subject to no assignable or even existing reasons; a man of intense force, with nothing to back his activity, or direct his energy, but simple caprice. And yet a single observation will make him perfectly intelligible, and reveal the fact that, in all his changes, he is subject to a law as truly as other men. Let it be perceived that he is a man of infinite logic, who holds premises by their forms without real insight, and he becomes a perfectly calculable force. He will now be seen taking up or assuming first one premise and then another, building infallible systems on each, and finding no food or rest in any; demonstrating, to-day, what the deep wants or the spiritual starvation of to-morrow will refute, as being no true bread; and so he will pass on through all phases of politics and religion, till, at last, as the miser's passion comes to its ripe state in the pursuit of money for its own sake, so he will come to his limit in the old scholastic theology, and there lie down in the true pasture and paradise of logic, to have it as the final good and last end of existence. Had it been his way to seek intelligence in simplicity and discover the truth in its own pure light; had he ever conceived the possibility that a truth should exist not contributed by himself, or prepared by his logic, it would have been otherwise. But taking it for his maxim that "consequence" is the only real and sufficient verity, he has proved the possibility of chasing after consequence


through all that man has believed or God has taught, and finding never any solid basis of truth.

I could name other examples equally familiar to us all, where the science of self-delusion has been carried to nearly the same perfection, and where almost the same degree of talent for missing the truth has been displayed. But I only wish to direct your attention to this whole class of writers as a study. Sufficiently exercised in this study to allow the impostures of their false method to reveal themselves rapidly sentence by sentence and without labor as you read, you will often find that what is in repute as being a most logical production is, in fact, only a string of scientific sophisms. To read almost any dozen pages of any great reasoner, (as the word is commonly applied,) in metaphysics or theology, will often be enough even to affect you with sadness. And the more, that this class of writers is the one generally designated by the epithet *profound*, and is really supposed to comprehend the spiritual miners of the race. Why else than because they are farthest off from the simplicity of truth, and have labored most perseveringly to beget a wisdom between words which is not in them?

You will see in these suggestions, which I will not farther multiply, by what method of exercise and observation I was led into the views of language and doctrine, whether false or true, which are set forth in my book. It is natural for me to suppose that other minds, exercised in a similar way, will come to a similar result; and since all my heresies originate just here, it is quite as natural to wish that others might be similarly exer-

cised. I wish it the more, because it is the only way in which I can hope that you will ever be set in a position really to verify, or properly discover the error of, my representations. For it is my misfortune, or would be if it cost me any anxiety, that I can open to you the real intent of what I have wished to say concerning language and doctrine, by no process more immediate. And yet you are likely to be withheld from this, by the suspicion that I am only recommending a way, in which you may come into the same hallucination with myself. Allow me, then, to ask of you that you will balance the suspicion I speak of, by simply observing how exactly my hallucination corresponds with the known facts, both of the philosophic and religious history of the race,—where all the progress that has ever been made will be found to resolve itself into a gradual culture in the meaning of words and symbols.

Whatever may be the effect of these suggestions, I am confident of this, that if any person will so far consent with me, as to give them a protracted and patient experiment, they will carry him into a different world of thought from that which very many occupy. It will become a most simple and perfectly evident truth, that we have no properly literal terms for the expression of spiritual ideas. When he writes, it will be as finding images, or putting truths into forms, and representing them to others under conditions of form. His mental workings themselves will gradually reveal the presence, more or less subtle, of types and grammatic laws that are of the outward state. When he reads, the sentences will start up all in forms, and he will see a world of images gathering into group



and assortment, acting and re-acting on each other in the relations of space. Nay, it will finally become a conviction with him that it is the great matter with men, what figures get into their faith, what forms are allowed to shape their convictions and stand before their feeling; and that formulas, so called, have their value only in this, that they are good, sound-bodied, health-inspiring forms, not that they are out of form and clear of it—that trinity, atonement, all the grand revelations of the gospel, are powers of truth and life in just this way.

Now, if this be extravagant,—if any one chooses, by a mere extempore judgment, to pronounce a sentence of absurdity against it, or to mock it as a vain conceit, he takes what is doubtless the privilege of ignorance, and with it, also, he will have the penalty.

But the question will now be raised, what place have we left for Christian theology, or for any reliable conception of the Christian scheme of salvation? That I have little respect for pure dogmatism, or for merely speculative theology, is sufficiently apparent; I have not made any secret of the fact. And yet I have a certain conviction, whether I can show the reasons or not, that we must have something, somehow held and exercised, that may be called theology. We must define, distinguish, arrange and frame into order the matter of our knowledge. System is the instinct of intelligence, and to crucify the instinct of system is, in one view, to crucify intelligence. I was careful, in my discourse at Andover, (pp. 810-17,) to specify some of the uses of abstractive and systematic doctrine, that I might not seem to over-

look its necessity, or to be insensible to its value and power, as an element in what may be called the economy of Christian truth. I know not whether I can now say any thing that will be more satisfactory or explicit.

If all human language is found to be under conditions of form, while truth itself, being spiritual, is out of form, or has no form, it does not follow that Christian doctrine is to be despaired of, or treated with indifference. It is only to be sought with greater patience, a more delicate candor, and a more ingenuous love. And for just this reason, Christian doctrine may be worth a great deal more to the world than it would be, if it could be bolted into the mind by terms of absolute notation, apart from all conditions of candor, justice and sympathy with God or man. If words are insufficient, as I have said, to convey spiritual things in literal senses and exact measures, they are only the more sufficient on that account, when taken as signs offered to candor and the interpreting power of sympathy and spiritual insight. We have words enough, and those which are good enough, if we can use them rightly or according to their true nature. If it requires a degree of sympathy, generously extended and for a length of time, to allow us to come into the whole or sphere of another, and feel out, in that manner, the real import of his words, before we can be sure that we understand him, it ought not to be a hard necessity that a like sympathy with God is requisite to make any true doctrine of God, whether in the words of man or of Scripture, intelligible and clear to the mind; or again, that this condition of sympathy requires a large infusion

of the Divine Spirit, which is itself a divine experience and an immediate knowledge.

What, though language can tell us nothing true concerning him, save as in forms that need to be interpreted by feeling and can open their light only to a spiritually discerning sympathy; what, though there be in them no real notation for truth, in which, by definitions, equations, inversions and such like operations, we may pile up a scheme of theology or divine knowledge from below, that shall stand and be true, like a treatise in mathematics, simply as being what it is; is it therefore nothing that we can know God as being with us and in us, filling our argumentations, opening to us the senses and powers of words, imparting himself to our secret experience as the light of all seeing, and molding us ever to that state of divine consciousness, which is, at once, the condition and principal substance of knowledge? I certainly think otherwise. Indeed, if it were possible to get religious truth into shapes and formulas having an absolute meaning, like the terms of algebra, as clear even to the wicked as to the pure, and requiring no conditions of character in the receivers, it would very nearly subvert, it seems to me, all that is most significant and sublime in the discipline of life.

The Scriptures, it seems to me, are most divinely wise in the fact that they attempt no such thing, but prefer to offer God and his mystery to the spiritual heart to be spiritually discerned,—discerned by love and pure docility and patient experience. They are most perfect as a gift, simply because of what, in one view, may be called their imperfection; that they do not offer God as a

market-place currency, in coins of words that coarse and brutish men may handle as knowingly as they who are most like him in spirit; throw him not about upon the ground as pearls to be trodden and champed by the swine of speculative reason; but present him to us glassed in images and forms, to be responsibly interpreted, with a delicate reverence and a spirit waiting for the discovery of God. Then he is to be the prize of industry, the reward of purity and love. Then the word is, "ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

The student then will be a student, not of theology, but, in the proper sense, of divinity. The knowledge he gets will be divinity, filling his whole consciousness,—a Living State, and not a scheme of wise sentences. He will be a man who understands God as being indoctrinated, or inducted into God, by studies that are themselves inbreathings of the divine love and power.

Holding impressions like these, it was not my design to offer any disrespect to creeds or church articles. They are good, we rightly say, as terms of *con-formity*, being the forms in which we coalesce and are comforted together. But they are never, on that account, to be held in a manner so stringent as to disallow the similar truths held by other disciples under different symbols and subject to different articulations of system; for, the moment we suffer this error, our creeds and articles become, in fact, instruments of schism, tearing us away from the body of Christ, in just the same degree as they condense and straiten our unity with each other, in the smaller circles to which we belong.

At the same time, it needs to be held in mind as a caution, more generally than it has been, that we are likely to over-value theologies and church articles, simply because we have but a feeble and small knowledge of truth. Hence the great amount of intolerance and wicked passion displayed against those who deviate, in some way, from accepted forms or formulas. Panic and passion belong to the worship of an idol, never to the worship of God. If we have accepted the commandments of men for doctrine and sworn ourselves by them, then it is only a matter of course that we hedge them about with wrath and ugly passion. But if we have come into the open realm of truth itself, knowing it as God's own realm, we are not likely to be profoundly disturbed because some favorite scheme of theology, or synopsis of theoretic doctrine, is disallowed in some one or more syllables. We shall be calm, trustful, patient. We shall even try to hope that more truth is going to be received than has been. It will not be necessary, in order to respect ourselves, as being earnest for something, that we should raise a fume of passion about our idol; but being ourselves in the truth as truth, theologies and church articles will be held simply as conveniences of organization, and we shall be as little disposed as possible to cut our flesh in their behalf, or to burn the flesh of others who are not able to offer a literal and perfectly unqualified assent to them.

But there must be some principle and power of organization, it will be said. If ground is taken that simply accommodates the individual, and no binding terms are

found to include and organize a social order in the truth, there is then no growth in it because there is nothing to grow; it has no permanence, because it does not frame to itself a church or social body, in and through which it may live and be glorified. No religious truth therefore is valuable, or is really true, that is not organic. If, then, we bring in the doctrine that no literal and exact truth is possible in language, but is there expressed only in figures and forms, or under conditions of analogy; if we soften the rigor of creeds and church articles in the way just suggested, holding them in a spirit of accommodation, such as allows the possible sufficiency of other schemes differently framed, it would seem that nothing fixed or determinate is left. All the outposts of system are gone. There is really no theology to organize and keep the growth of the Christian body. Each man is to have a kind of spiritual freedom, which is very nearly the same as dissipation—to see visions and dream dreams, and offer his licentious vagaries as the veritable inspirations of God. Or, if the sounder and more competent teachers have too much inherent discretion for this, the weaker and less capable will only offer the excesses and crudities of their dull imaginations as the essential truth of Christ; and so the church will find herself at sea without either chart, or compass, or science to guide her way, foundering and sinking in the vast inanity she has ventured upon so rashly.

What shall we say to this? We can not deny that God has erected a church, and if that be true, there must be some organic power provided for its maintenance. If it be not organized by sacraments and ceremonies, or by

a mysterious priestly unction, then it must be organized in and by the truth. This latter is the Protestant doctrine. And it will be found, as a matter of fact, that all the strong bodies of Protestant believers—the Lutheran, the Reformed church, the Scotch, the Methodist and, in fact, the Independent connection—have been organized in and by the strong ligaments of formulas, taken as being the very essence and literal being of the truth. In their formulas, these bodies or churches have all their distinct characteristics, and, as it would almost seem, a vital force equally distinctive and peculiar to themselves. They seem, in fact, to be different organizations, and many will even praise the stern uncomplying rigor of their doctrine, for the very reason that it is seen to have an organizing power so efficiently and broadly characteristic.

Now, if there be something agreeable in this, which I will not deny, it does not seem to me to be any thing that is properly Christian. On the contrary, though we love to see organic vigor and lively characteristics, it is not pleasant to see Christian bodies animated by distinct *varieties of life*. Such appearances awaken the painful suspicion that what we call our Christianity is a product only of the organizing force of human dogmatism. It will also occur to every thoughtful person that the constructive energy of formulas, thus evinced, is not caused by their definite hold of the literal truth; for then they could not differ so remarkably from each other; but by the fact rather that they are impostures of precision, so effective in blinding or limiting the vision both of their authors and their disciples. Indeed, it can be no secret

that the solid, scientific look of dogmatism, by which we are so apt to be impressed, is due simply to the fact that the dogmatizer solidifies the smoke he is in, by the concentrative force of his dullness; becoming the most precise of teachers, because he is so mystified by his own vagueness, that he hews it into solid blocks of knowledge—which, then, others accept, in the certainty that they must be solid, because of the exactness of their shapes.

Besides, it is now beginning to be found that the organizing power of dogmatism may be over-valued. If, beginning at the Reformation, we see the different families of Protestantism going forth, under their articles, to make a vigorous show of life and energy in the centuries that follow, and there take it up as our song that “sound doctrine,” meaning by the term a hard, stone-table theology, is the first condition of Christian health and progress, it would be well to note also the fact that, for some reason, the sound doctrine, after all, was able to maintain its organizing power only for a certain length of time. How many systems of new theology, so called, have we had in New England, within our own short memory. We complain that the Protestant world is falling into endless subdivisions, and that now, at last, the authority of catechisms and the organizing power of church articles are so enfeebled, as to indicate a general dissolution of ecclesiastical order. This we lay to the evil manner of the times; but really it is due to the original defect of the organizing power itself. A pure dogmatic organization has a necessary law of limitation in its own nature. It can run, like a watch, only for so

long a time ; for the sound doctrine, appealing as it does to each man's judgment, must of necessity go on to multiply systems of sound doctrine, till even the appearance of unity is gone.

However this may be, the possibilities of system are not yet exhausted, and they never can be ; for they are infinite. Purely theologic systems are structures raised by the logical understanding, when it undertakes to be the architect, in the forms and measures of words, of the Divine System—articulations of symbols, organized by one or another, to represent his universe and be the infinite he proposes to men. And as there is no limit to the possible systems that may be framed or composted in this manner, one system is continually rising up, and will be, to chase another and claim, in turn, the assent of the world. On one hand, are God and eternity as an infinite material, out of form. On the other, is the formal understanding working at or upon this material, or professing to do so ; trying new resolutions of the conceptions or figures by which it is represented, taking one figure instead of another and repaying what is scant in that by what is fuller in another ; and so, having gotten a few forms of words mortised together by the carpentry of logic, it offers them to the world as another and better account of the Infinite Material—that is, of God and divine government. And so it comes to pass that, while there is but one truth, we have many theologies—little finite universes all, soap-bubble worlds rising by their own levity, whirled away by all cross winds of philosophy and Providential history, bursting in tiny collisions, or without collision, by the mere thinness of their films,

and not leaving moisture enough, at the point where they vanish, to show where they were.

In this manner it begins to be felt, and will be more and more felt, as the speculative systems are multiplied, that the solidities of dogmatism grow flashy and thin. It will be so, not because they deteriorate in quality, as many are trying to believe, but because their quality is revealed. It is made clear enough already in this process that, in the matter of organization itself, they are not all which they have been taken to be; that the efficiency and constructive energy they seemed, for a time, to have, was due, in no small degree, to historic causes in the Christian body of the world, which time would necessarily exhaust. Indeed, we are just now opening our eyes to see, what ought to have been clear enough at a glance always, that man can not organize the Church of God, and that no sound scheme of organization can depend on frame-works of science or theory erected by him. This, we now see, is the very principle of necessary disintegration; and if the atomizing process, now going on, is to be arrested before it comes to its last fruit, in a state of complete dissipation, both as regards the bonds of fellowship and the authority of truth itself, we must turn ourselves again to the question, how or by what more sufficient method God will have his church to be organized. What is the true organic principle of Christianity; that in which it will settle toward unity and a condition of permanent growth in the truth?

Here we open the Scriptures, first of all, and discover that, while the church is to have officers, and sacraments, and public worship, the organic power is always

represented as Divine—"one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all"—the body of Christ, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all"—Christ, the head, "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted." Or sometimes another representation of the same truth is given, when the "unity of the Spirit" is spoken of, and all are declared to be members of one spiritual body. In all these representations, it stands out to view that the true organic principle is God himself—the Divine Nature incarnate outwardly, and so inserted inwardly in human faith and consciousness.

It is nowhere intimated that Christianity is a speculation, or a theory, or that any terms of human thought scientifically employed can organize it. Nothing is said of theologic confessions or articles, or of scientific efforts in Christian doctrine. The texts constantly cited in commendation of "sound doctrine," and supposed to be injunctions that maintain the necessity of being grounded in theologic articles, are found, when narrowly inspected, to be only scholastic misapplications or mistranslations—tokens of the universal imposture regarding this matter of doctrine that, long ages ago, had gotten possession of the Christian mind. After twelve or fourteen whole centuries had been spent in debating, and fighting, and burning, for theologic doctrine, it was to be supposed that the scripture would be full of texts that magnify the idol consecrated by so expensive an offering.

Thus, we have the epithet "*sound*," which occurs many times in application to "words," "speech," "faith," "doctrine," and is understood to commend the study of a

rugged, solid, and sturdy system of speculative theology. Whereas it only means "wholesome," as it is once translated; that is, health-giving, in the original, *hygeian*. So also the famous all-text of Paul, a text which seems even to have worn itself into the tongues of many teachers, becomes what it is only in the manner above described. It reads in the translation—"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." In the original—"Hold fast the impression of the health-giving words thou heardest of me, &c.,"—having no reference at all to any matter of theoretic doctrine, or church article, any more than to the Copernican doctrines of astronomy. The text in Jude—"Contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints"—has suffered a similar hardship. Literally and properly translated, the call or exhortation is—"Strive [agonize] for the faith, once for all delivered to the saints." "Contend," a word of churchly pugnacity, is not here. By "the faith," too, is meant no scheme of speculative or theologic doctrine, but the practical doctrine of a godly life, as grounded in the living faith of Christ. The current of the epistle shows that the errors in view are not errors of opinion, but licentious manners and wicked practices. And the phrase "once for all," too, indicating a certain sense of completeness in what is called the faith, at a time prior even to the beginnings of speculation, shows how far off the apostle is from any conception of that which is, hereafter, to make so great a figure in the church, viz., theoretic doctrine, articles of church theology.

The hard fortune of these texts may be well illustrated by the use to which another from the Old Testament is

subjected, in a manner exactly parallel. It is one of the distinctions of the ancient religion that it had no theology, or any thing approaching theology, until the speculative element began to appear in the incipiently theosophic writings of the Apocrypha. The idea of church articles, confessions, or schemes of doctrine, was not even conceived before that time. And yet the text—"Stand ye in the ways and see, ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls,"—how often do we hear it reiterated, and with what solemnity of emphasis, as a call from God, not to return to the old paths of piety and duty in which the good men of former ages walked, but to the doctors of the old theology and to the old church articles. Furthermore, it will be seen that the apostles are continually protesting, in one form or another, against exactly that which most resembles a speculative and theoretic activity—the "gnosis" or "knowledge" of one; the "wisdom" of another; "foolish and unlearned questions that do gender strifes;" "oppositions of science, falsely so called;" "vain janglings;" "profane and vain babblings;" the being spoiled "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ;" "doting about questions and strifes of words." They discourage, in a word, all the attempts of inquisitive and would-be wise men to work out a theory or philosophem of the gospel, by activity in and about their own human center. Christ, they say, is the doctrine, and the method of reason is faith. "Be not carried about with divers and *strange* doctrines, [i. e., doctrines of mere speculation, that do not minister to godly edifying, and

are therefore "strange," i. e., *foreign*, or outside of the Christian truth,] "for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace"—implying a conviction, as we see, that it is the heart, or grace in the heart, and not any platform of articles, that will anchor a soul in stability. And for just this reason, I suppose, the same apostle declares, that the grand test of orthodoxy is in what the heart receives, and not in what the head thinks—"Now the end of the commandment [that which includes every thing] is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

It is remarkable, also, in the same general view of the apostolic teachings, that Paul, in his two epistles to Timothy, which are in fact ministerial charges, and where, of course, if ever, the syllabus of church articles would be insisted on, makes no allusion to any such thing; but instead of this, he presents, in each epistle or charge, a purely historic compend of the facts of the incarnation, separated from all conception of theory, as being the only real summary of doctrine that he knows.

FIRST CHARGE. "Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

SECOND CHARGE. "But is now made manifest, by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; whereof I am appointed a preacher and an apostle."

His creed, you perceive, is a creed of simple fact; his gospel, the gospel which his very apostleship is

instituted to publish, is the world-astounding mystery of the incarnation, as completed in the subsequent matter of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

And it accords with this, that the nearest approach any where made in the scripture to the proposal of a confession of faith, is when John propounds the incarnation itself as a creed of fact—"Hereby know ye the spirit [which is] of God. *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*" The "Apostles' Creed," so called, is scarcely more than a reproduction and expansion of this. And if we ask for the best and healthiest and least uncertain forms of truth, under which (in connection with the divine presence in the consciousness of the disciples, and by that consciousness interpreted) the organizing power of the Christian grace may become most effective, indestructible, and harmonious; I would say that we ought to adhere as closely as possible, in all catechisms and confessions, to the simple historic matter of the gospel. This is the real substructure, the pillar and ground of all truth—it is the gospel as God shapes it. True, it can be misinterpreted; and so can any thing. The most abstract and theoretic confession can be misinterpreted far more easily, and has the disadvantage that, being without authority, as a merely human product, it provokes dissent and rejection, and holds a natural connection, thus, with all manner of eccentricities and misbeliefs.

At the same time, there is no harm in articles more theologic, if rightly employed. I only think there is much less virtue in them than is commonly supposed. The church has had a long, and, alas! too literally fiery

trial in them, and God, we may be sure, has some use to serve, by a history of so great bitterness. Perhaps it is that we may learn what to think of our own thinking, as well as of his infinite truth; how to embrace each other in that truth; how to rest there in a conscious amplitude of faith, that answers to the fullness of God. Simply to have learned that words are words, and how to hold them as such, is to have gotten an immense advantage, as regards the future sobriety, stability, unity, and order of the Christian body. But it is high time to give up the really childish thought that man is going to erect himself into such a position of wisdom, as to give out a theoretic form of Christianity that will organize the Church of God. No such thought should connect, for a moment, with our theologic articles and confessions. If we comfort ourselves in a general sense of agreement under them, they must be held for comfort, not for judgment. Still, the crystal will not shape itself by the book of mineralogy, but by its own secret laws; and the Church of God will not any more shape itself in church articles, but in the incarnate mystery of the Life. The soundest doctrine for this purpose, that *we* can furnish, will, in God's opinion, be the doctrine of the heart; "For it is a good thing [an excellent cure for strange doctrine] that the heart be established with grace."

Such, in general, is the result obtained by a reference to the scripture. And now the question returns, what is theology? what place have we for it? what good place can it fill, or good service render?

Of course every right answer to this question will

admit that it can not be a law for any thing, not being itself infallible. It is even conceivable that one article of its value consists in the fact that it is not true, or at least not sufficiently true; for every system conceived by man partakes the limitation of man; and yet the system may be wanted to collect his knowledges and frame them into some intelligible order. This will comfort his intelligence. It will give him the method, also, by which to teach what he knows, and learn what he does not. If our generalizations are only General Thumbs, if our systems are only pocket systems of the infinite, they are yet necessary as accommodations to ourselves, and, possibly, are good for what they exclude, as well as for what they contain. They are to the disciple what the iris is to the eye, drawing its opaque and variously-colored curtains round the aperture of sight, that only just so much of the light may enter as will make the tiny picture within distinct and clear.

It is also conceivable, and is probably a serious and momentous truth, that the exercise of system or the endeavor after system, is commonly a greater benefit than the actually resulting systems prepared. Instigated, in this effort or exercise, by the natural instinct of system, the disciple is made stronger and more competent by his exercise; though he reaches no veritable system of God at all. He is drawn toward a closer coherency and compactness of thought; his religious convictions are comforted and fortified; he is better guarded, also, against fantastic experiences and wild illusions, that might otherwise confound the dignity of his life, and separate even his duties from the respect that is necessary to their value.

No person will ever become, therefore, a good and sufficient teacher or preacher of the gospel, without a strong theologic discipline. But here, it will be seen, the benefit gained pertains principally to the building exercise, and not to the structure built. Possibly another system, differently shaped and colored, may temple as much of God's truth as mine; possibly other men want the exercise of building, too, more than a ready-built temple from me. Therefore, since God has given to his children so many blocks and timbers of words to be used in this good exercise, I will not complain that others of my friends are piling up very different looking structures from mine; but if they are built, as I can see, of the same material and so as to meet the same general use, I will then try to enjoy both theirs and mine together. Or, if they come upon me in anger, because my house is differently built from theirs, and call down fire from heaven to burn it, I will try to comfort myself in the confidence, that heaven has no fire, such as they ask for.

It is easy, also, to see that the instinct of system and a certain actual determination toward it are, in one view, necessary conditions of insight and true interpretation. We are forbidden thus to stop in the letter, and receive as truth a medley, or mere catalogue of symbols uninterpreted. We are required to observe and reduce their antagonisms, and, in order to this, to penetrate their forms and find the unity of truth in which they coalesce. Only we are in constant peril of setting one symbol, or class of symbols, above the others, and reducing these to system under the former, taken as being the literal truth; in which case they are virtually disallowed and rejected.

But if we speak of the actual results of theologic study and exercise,—the forms of truth, or opinion, or system prepared by it,—we need to distinguish between a close or merely reasoned system, and an open free system that waits for the discovery always of God; between an incrustation on the outside, to keep and imprison the life, and a cell or point of embryonic tissue begun at the center of life itself. They tell us that when the crustacea have grown a shell so thick and old that the life can no longer pierce through it and keep it on the footing of a living substance, it begins to be a foreign matter constringing the vital action, and the animal dies, suffocated by the tomb he has built. So it is when our theological crustacea are confined in the close system we speak of. Since it is no longer *of* them, but a cerement of dead and strange matter *about* them, not quickened by their faith, they die of strange doctrine in it.

This distinction of a close system and one that is open, between an incrustation and a vital embryonic center, will be farther cleared, perhaps, if it is stated as a distinction between mere theology and divinity.

Divinity has its basis in fact and being,—God as in the creation, God in history. It meets us in all outward objects; and again in the Scripture, in the form of political and religious annals, the biographies of distinguished* saints, the teachings of prophets, the incarnate life and death of the Word made flesh. Here opens a vast realm of divine fact, radiant in every part with the light of God. But this all is body, not spirit; the face of divinity, but not the power. By divinity we mean what may be derived to us from this and made conscious

within us, by an immediate experience of God, in connection with this. It is what of God a regenerate man may receive, in virtue of the new inner sense awakened in him. It is that influx and intergrowth of the divine nature that is consciously experienced, when every inlet of the soul is opened by love, and faith, and prayer, and holy living, and patient waiting upon God. It is interpretation made by experience,—a knowledge had of God, through the medium of consciousness, and resembling the knowledge we get of ourselves in the same manner; or, as I have said already, it is not a doctrine or system of doctrine, but a Living State, the Life of God in the soul of man. Of course it is an open state, and not a confined or closed state,—a condition of germinative force and ever extending growth.

Theology, on the other hand, according to the proper force of the word, in Greek, is what results, when the subject, God, is logically expounded or reasoned. What the result will be depends, of course, on the state or point where the exposition begins. If the operator stands in the position of a simply natural consciousness, then he expounds what he has included in his consciousness. This may be called *mere* theology, a science built without divine experience, as one might give a theoretic account of the moon's atmosphere without having breathed it. Or, if the operator begin at the point of a living consciousness of God, which is the state of real divinity, then his effort will be to expound that in speculative order, just as the intellectual philosopher expounds his intellectual consciousness. This may be called *Christian* theology, or evangelical theology; or it is sometimes called

divinity; though it will be undivine, just according to the degree of human defect or mistake there is in it, which is probably a large subtraction.

Christian theology, then, is grounded in divinity, according to the old maxim, *Fides precedit intellectum*. Then, again, it rests on the Scripture body of fact, because, in that, the divine is bodied and expressed, and offered to experience; according to the apostle's notion, when he says: "If any man build upon this foundation [Jesus Christ] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." And then, if the question be how much of Christian theology, man's building on Christ the foundation, is one or the other; how much is gold, silver, precious stones; how much wood, hay, stubble, the answer must be various. It will never be pure gold, or any thing like it, and generally the proportion of hay and stubble will be abundant.

The ablest exposition I have seen of this subject is that of Dr. Rothe, translated in the Postscript to Mr. Morell's "Philosophy of Religion." His object is to find a place, or show a true ground for speculative theology. And, though he does not intimate, what I believe to be just, that the true line of direction in all fruitful study, is that which proposes rather divinity than theology, he yet lays down the distinction under other terms, and makes it the center of his exposition. And he brings his exposition thus to the true conclusion, that Christian theology is the speculative or logical exposition of the Christian consciousness, considered as containing the divine; just as philosophy is of the natural and personal self-conscious-



ness; and that one has the same *kind* of validity and verity as the other. But he omits the notice of two considerations which, at this point, are of great importance.

1. The fact that both philosophy and theology, being expositions of consciousness, or of what is in it, are concerned in bringing into form, what is out of form, and can be only figuratively represented in it; also the fact that the logical faculty is a faculty whose element is the matter of perception,—the world of form, and language as being of that world,—and, of course, can never approach the higher truths of the natural or spiritual consciousness, closer than by handling analogies before it; hence that, both in philosophy and theology, the logical expounder can make it certain, by almost no degree of caution, that he is not imposing on himself by spinning a theory that is really of some word, or latent form of grammar in his language, and not of the consciousness itself. Hence the eternal changes noted in the history of philosophy; which, though it is ever dealing with real truths of consciousness, has never yet been able to fix immovably any one doctrine, and never will be; for the manifest reason, that no one form is so related to any one truth, that another may not be conceived for it which has not *some* advantages, and will not better accommodate some other speculative system. I only except in this the absolute truths, the expressions for which class with algebraic notations. Is it probable that theology, being one in its method with philosophy, and under the same speculative conditions, however distinct in the matter of it and the Scripture ground of fact in which it

is based, can ever become a science, or attain to a fixed and properly authoritative statement?

2. That the Christian, or divine consciousness, of which speculative theology is to be the expounder, differs from the natural consciousness in the fact that it is no constant quantity; that it fluctuates with the fidelity of the man and the spiritual temperament of his life; that it is always a mixed and never a pure state, mixed with lies, sensualities, and all manner of undivinities, and these so cunningly inserted as not to reveal their presence; that sometimes the investigator comes under the power of the world, stolen away from himself, and then, as the divine can not be held in the memory a moment after it is gone from the heart, he swings to a new center of motion, according to the balance of matter left in his consciousness. This being the true state, out of which a science or theory is to come, and which it is to represent, what is that science like to be? Is not every theologian, though it may cost him some mortification to confess it, moved to a very different way of speculation, at one time, from that which seems truest at another. Such is our infirmity! Will the infirmity of our theology be less? What success would philosophy hope for, if the natural consciousness, it expounds, were mixed in the same way with contrary currents, partaking, by turns, the nature of stones and animals, and holding in its contents no fixed quantity?

At the same time, it does not follow, either that philosophy or theology is worthless. They have an immense value as exercises and cultivating powers, although so little able to fix and settle in words the import of our

consciousness, or to produce the system of the infinite, in which alone our consciousness can have its full interpretation. There is a progress in theology, due as much to its varieties, as to the excellence of its particular determinations. It is even useful or necessary, as a re-acting basis for the mind, in climbing into a divine experience. If it is so blended with that experience, as to have its light therein, and be corrected and amplified thereby as an open system; if it is catholic in the same, as acknowledging all other systems based in the same divine, evangelical experience, and built upon the same Scripture foundation; in a word, if it is saturated with divinity, so as to be divinity according to the true force of that word, formerly so current, but latterly so far displaced, then it is the true wisdom of God. Not all wisdom, but true; for still there is a livelier and more competent medium of truth than any that classes in the modes of speculation; I mean the medium of simple expression. The poetic forms of utterance are closer to the fires of religion within us, more adequate revelations of consciousness, because they reveal it in flame. Parable, symbol, description, illustration, emphasis and tone, the look of a divine charity and the conduct of a soul in the divine beauty,—these, I hope you will agree, are better and more adequate revelations of truth than theology, in its best form, can be.

Now, if it seem to any of you that, in such an estimate of theology as I have given, all organization is likely to perish, let me suggest for your comfort that, when God organizes, he will do it, not by a part, but by all,—not by theology alone, but by all the outgoings, aims, actions,

instrumentalities, and functions of the spiritual body. He does not organize the solar system by gravity alone, but by all the other powers acting with it,—nay, by each and every dead particle and living atom acting with it. I can not, therefore, see that he will call on the theologians to organize and keep up the church for him. But he will be the organizing principle and Head of the body Himself. And being the head, he will have many sorts of members, all various functions under him. He will have theologies, (probably more than one,) confessions, offices, sacraments, days and rites of worship, sermons, and homilies, and living voices, holy charities and Christly aims, drawing all the faithful together; and, with all these, martyred men and women, who, being dead, will yet live in the times following; and by all these he will organize the church. And this will be an organization solid and true. I can trust it without a particle of anxiety; though, if I were obliged to join some theologic council, or chair, in preparing the scheme of speculative doctrine that should keep all safe and be the containing law of the future church, I think I should never sleep again. Let God organize all by all. Nothing is more clear, at this moment, than that this is the only hope; for the reign of dogma, and state power, and ceremony, and priestly orders,—every thing that has held the organizing power, in past ages, is now breaking down into impotence and passing away. And what shall we see, in this, but a preparation for the reign of the Spirit as just now suggested; which, if it comes into this valley of bones lying apart, and breathes into them, as the Life itself of God, will they not come together and live?

This, it seems to me, is the sound method of organization ; and if this will not make a strong compact of growth and unity in the truth, I see not that more can be hoped from theologic articles. Either Christ will organize the body for all time in his own Incarnate Person, or else it never can be organized.

On the whole, my supposed heresy, in regard to this matter of theological system or speculative doctrine, may be very well summed up in the language of Luther ; (Sears' Life, p. 223 ;) only it requires that language to be tempered by many qualifications, and then, being true, to be carried out more effectually in its practical applications :—" You ask me how far I think dialectics useful to a theologian ? I see not how they can be otherwise but hurtful. In the beginning and exercising the minds of the young, they may have their use ; but in sacred learning, where faith and heavenly illumination alone are sought after, they ought to be left behind, as Abraham, about to offer sacrifice, left the servants and asses behind."

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

PASSING now from this general view of language and doctrine, or of theologic method, to some of the particular topics of my book,—the Person of Christ, the Trinity, and the Work of Redemption,—it will be seen that all my supposed heresies, in reference to these great subjects, are caused by the arrest of speculation and the disallowance of those constructive judgments, or a priori arguments, by which terms that are only analogies, and mysteries that are most significant when taken only as symbols, are made to affirm something wiser and more exact than what they express. It is very easy for a critic, who wishes to be sharp against me at the smallest expense of steel, to please himself in the discovery that I am only trying in fact, without knowing it, to introduce a new dogmatism. This, I believe, is the turn that several have given to their strictures. And about an equal number have charged, directly opposite to these, that I propose to throw down all the pillars of theology, break up all the solid foundations of truth, and commend every one to the liberty of his own passions, and the vagaries of his own imagination. It will be found that I am doing exactly neither,—that I am simply cutting short speculation at the point where it begins to *create* a knowledge by inference, and transferring the matter that was going to be preyed upon by logic, directly into the care of spiritual discernment, the only qualified inter-

preter,—there to be felt, experienced, fed upon, as the true bread, before it has become so mixed with dialectic quibbles and scientific unwisdoms, that it has no longer any bread or nutriment to yield. It will be found that, instead of trying to get all the great truths in question, *out of* their symbols into others, and build them into sciences that are independent of the symbols, I am rather showing how to stay by the symbols or in them, as the best and holiest expressions of truth; on the ground that Christian doctrine is most adequately distinguished in the forms of the word, by a devout inspection or perusal of them, taken as simple presentations; just as the souls of our friends are presented in, and expressed by, and not argued inferentially from, or *out of* their bodies.

It will be seen that I have managed, in this way, to find a place for faith that is freer and more simple, and just as much more intelligent. In regard to each of the three subjects, it will be seen that nothing is done save simply to show how the forms in which God is offered to our faith may be *used* so as to get their true meaning and be themselves the truth to us. The fundamental principle assumed is this and no other,—that the value of the word rests in the impressions it is to produce in us, and not in the theories or scientific versions we are to produce of it.

To maintain a view so modest and practical, I was called upon, of course, to protest against the mere logical figments that are so often set up in the name of theology. It was necessary that some cargoes of contraband wisdom should thus be forfeited. Accordingly, I did not hesitate to make free use of logic as a negative and destructive

instrument, (which I lawfully might,) to sweep away the piles of rubbish heaped upon God's truth, by scholastics and amateur disciples, who could not observe the distinction between constructing and receiving a gospel. If I seemed, in these negative arguments, to be more adventurous or destructive than I should be, or could, with safety to our religious foundations, still it will be found that nothing is destroyed, save as death, the last enemy, shall be; and that the grand result of the clearance made is, that we are set in a condition more simply positive than before, to receive and re-assert all that constituted the positive meaning and value of our former beliefs. We are only required to receive the truth of God, more through our love and the unquestioning docility of a simple and trustful heart, and less through the over-wise and perversely ingenious industry of the head,—to look on the stupendous mysteries in which God is expressed to faith, and embrace what is expressed in them by faith; not to plunge into the very heart of the mysteries themselves, as if they were only riddles given to be solved by the curious; or, at best, a gospel of dialectic subtleties, to amuse the blindness and while away the guilty years of the perishing.

This will now be seen, as I proceed to exhibit, more fully and carefully, the doctrine I designed to assert, in reference to the three principal subjects of revelation just named. I begin with the Person of Christ.

Who is Christ? The incarnation of the divine nature. For what purpose? The manifestation of God—therefore he is called the Life manifested—God manifest in

the flesh—the Word made flesh, that we may behold in him the Father's glory—the express image of God—God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. In his miraculous birth, too, he is seen to be of a double nature, at once divine and human, the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

Two things then are evident. First, that he is a very peculiar being, who can not be classed in the simple genus humanity; in one view a union of the incompatible, the divine and the human, the infinite and the finite; and being thus a person wholly abnormal and mysterious, we manifestly can not interpret the language applied to him by a reference to our own merely normal experience or consciousness, and so make out the internal mystery of his nature. If sometimes acts are attributed to him that seem to be divine, sometimes others that seem to be human, we can not say, 'this infers deity,' 'this a human soul;' we can only refer them all alike to the one abnormal person, and the secret mystery of his consciousness. Secondly, it is to be seen beforehand that he is not given as a riddle to our curiosity, or that we may set ourselves to reason out his mystery, but simply that God may thus express his own feeling and draw himself into union with us, by an act of accommodation to our human sympathies and capacities.

But the question remains, who is Christ, what is there in him? The true answer is, that he is, externally viewed, a union of God and man, whose object is to humanize the conception of God, and so to express or communicate God. But is there any distinct human soul in the person of Christ? What are the contents of his

person? Here begins one of my heresies, when I answer that the question is impracticable, unphilosophic, dictated only by false curiosity, and of course not answered by scripture. Christ is here to express God, not to puzzle us in questions about the internal composition of his person. Besides, the human element is nothing to me, save as it brings me God, or discovers to me, a sinner, the patience and brotherhood of God, as a Redeemer from sin. As to the man, the human soul, I see men enough and meet with human souls enough elsewhere. The tenderness we rejoice in, as testified in the person of Christ and under the type of a human feeling, is the tenderness of God, not the tenderness of the human soul, or of the distinct human substance of Jesus. What we feel so deeply is that God is with us, on our human level, and is drawn so close to our sympathy—not that a man is. And the moment we find a human soul in him, distinctly conscious and distinctly active, we shall immediately draw ourselves to that, in the manner of the mere humanitarians, and having our sympathy with that, we shall be turned quite away from what is the sole, or, at least, principal object of the incarnation; viz., the manifestation of the Life, or the expression of God.

But the human soul, it will be said, may be here, though not distinctly active. Doubtless it may, suppose we judge that it is. Now we are letting go the expression of God, to play our curiosity on a perfectly idle question—opening, in fact, a whole world of idle speculation, where the most we can do is to be busy with our own nothings and forget God. For if we can dare to thrust ourselves into the very bosom of this mysterious

being, and play our constructions there unintimidated, if we have found a soul there that has no distinct activity, and written it down as our fixed opinion, what then is this soul to us? Is it any thing? Can we sympathize with a soul that has no distinct consciousness? Indeed, have we not much to do, after all, to keep it from non-entity? And then, if we succeed in finding a place where non-entity will not overtake it, we shall want to know very much what becomes of it—whether it has any moral character of its own? whether it rose with Jesus in his resurrection? what place it will hold in a future world? whether it is ever to be more distinctly active than it was here, or ever to have a distinctly human character? And suppose, after we have gone this round of problems, confusing thus all thought and feeling, so that, for a great part of our life, the manifestation of God in Christ and his passion is virtually lost, we come at last to the clear and fixed opinion that a human soul was in the person of Jesus, but was never distinctly active and never will be—what then have we done? Why, we have discovered with infinite labor that a certain drop is in the sea—nothing more! The sea is not any larger, or purer, or stronger; for if the reality of Christ be God, and God is infinite, what more or better is he for this drop of humanity that is merged thus eternally in the boundless ocean of his nature?—so merged that, as regards its human existence, it shall never be distinctly active, or distinctly known?

Was it not better and wiser, I now ask, first of all, to settle what God's object is in this wonder of the incarnation, and let His object be the law and limit of our

inquiries? The union of the divine and human, being only for expression, what is there in it for us beyond the expression? There may be a human soul here or there may not—that is a matter with which we have nothing to do, and about which we have not only no right to affirm, but no right to inquire. All that we have to do is to take the person of Jesus at its face, speak of the human and the divine, assume their union, and receiving them in this perfectly trustful, incurious manner, let them enter our spirit as a new principle of life from God—so to put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

If there be passages of scripture which go beyond external expression, opening to us the interior psychology of Christ's person, that is a distinct matter. I know of none that do it, or can even be supposed to do it. There are such as speak of his infant state and his "increase in wisdom." But this most certainly is language only of external description; for it is also declared, in the same breath, that he increased "in favor with God," which can not be taken in any other sense than the sense of external description. The meaning of the language is exhausted when we understand the writer to say that the infant Christ grew up, as outwardly regarded, in a course of regular development in knowledge and character; increasing, as we say of other children, in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. If we say that this language refers to the distinct growth of his human *soul* in wisdom and in favor with God, then manifestly we do it by an inference of our own, for the words affirm no such thing. Besides, the conclusion itself is not

orthodox; for the unfolding of wisdom and character are the truest and most fundamental incidents of *distinct personality*, and orthodoxy asserts, not two distinct persons in Christ, but "two natures and one person."

Now it seems to be a very simple thing to *infer*, in a logical way, that when Christ is said to grow in wisdom and favor with God, there must be a distinctly active and distinctly conscious human soul in his composition—at any rate a human soul. Almost any body could draw such an inference. Just as easy is it also to infer, with the Unitarian objector, when the Savior himself says in his age of maturity, "the Son can do nothing of himself," that the Son has no power but such as is derivative; for if he were essential deity, or an omnipotent co-equal person with the Father, then he could do something of himself as well as the Father; and since he can not, he is confessed to be no more than a creature. All such inferences, I say, are easy. It requires the smallest possible insight to draw them, and the less of insight one has, the more likely he is to draw them. But the reason why they should not be drawn is sufficiently evident. For it is given us beforehand that God, or the Divine Word, for the sake of manifestation, or to communicate of himself to man, is going to do, as it were, an impossible thing: viz, to enter into and be in the subject state—that is, so far subject as, by means of his subjection, to meet us on our human level and through or under conditions of human brotherhood. Of course it is implied that he will appear and speak and act as being under human limitation, far enough at least to get the effect he desires; viz., to communicate Himself. But the whole

movement is violent and abnormal, and if we go to work to draw our deductions or inferences from it, as if it were wholly normal,—one to prove that there is a distinct human soul growing up in him, with a distinct human character; the other to prove that there is nothing but such a soul, with such a character,—then we have only gotten up a man, in one case, to stand between us and the Word called incarnate; and in the other, quite reasoned away the incarnation itself.

Now, there was to be done what no human thought can penetrate—what, in one view, can not be; the infinite to assume limitations, the Word to become flesh—only through this formal impossibility achieved, God is to open to us visions of love and truth, and communicate, as in no other way He can, the knowledge of all that is most transforming in His Love and glorious in his character. But instead of receiving what he would give us in true simplicity, we begin to speculate on the limitations, infancy, growth, obedience, passibility, referring all these limitations to a man or human nature wrapped up in him, as if we had a perfect perception or understanding of the grand historic wonder of his person, and as if the incarnation were a perfectly normal affair. And then, when we have concluded that what is humanly done is done by a human creature, exactly all that was proposed to be accomplished in the incarnation is so far defeated; for, instead of having God himself presented or expressed, a man is found hid in the miracle, who is doing and suffering, in his distinct humanity, precisely that which God assumed to be the medium of His own manifestation! It is just as if it were insisted that the word “fire,”

applied to the burning bush, must be taken in its properly normal sense, as having a property that burns wood!

Instead of reasoning in this way, we should, first of all, acknowledge the miracle, and then begin to ask what God will teach us in it. We should take it as being just what it pretends to be, the Word made flesh, and so the vehicle of God to men; and then, instead of raising a great problem in psychology, we should turn ourselves at once to look for that which the vehicle brings. Manifestly Christ, being in his person out of and beyond all normal conditions, must, of consequence, be psychologically uninvestigable. We can know nothing concerning him save precisely what externally appears, or is expressed.

However, the orthodox formula—"two natures and one person"—is correctly worded, if only it be taken in the more exterior, and not in the analytical and speculative sense. We are to regard him as a person representable to thought only by means of two poles, or denominations, the divine and the human; which, however, we can no way investigate, as regards the mode of their interior relation; which, in one view, are wholly incompatible. The object of the mystery is not to raise a scientific problem, but to express God. Our wisdom, therefore, is to receive him, in perfect simplicity, as a twofold nature, a person who is God with us, Son of God and Son of Man; and holding him before us, by these two poles of thought, to let him have just that power in the soul and bring in just that sense of God and union to God, which he will, when thus regarded. That he is divine, the Word made flesh, we know; for that is re-

vealed. That the transaction is properly described, not as a coming together and spiritual coalescence of the Word and some man, but as an assumption of humanity or the flesh, we also know. But whether the assumption includes the assumption of a human soul; or whether, if it does and that soul lapses into the divine person so as to have, no more, any personality or character of its own, it would really *be*; or so far different from the state of not being, that a true account of the one person would require us to notice at all the presence, or trace the historic fortunes of an entity so ambiguous,—what, in a word, the assumption involves, how the one person thus resulting is interiorly constituted, what part the human occupies in him or is, who speaks, obeys, suffers, dies,—these are questions we are never to raise. They are by the supposition excluded, both as being impossible and irrelevant. We have nothing to do but simply to look upon the incidents of the life of Jesus as belonging to the one divine person and, through these incidents, taken all as media of divine expression, come, as directly as possible, into the import and power of what is expressed. But if we must be a little more wise than receiving of the fullness of the Word, grace for grace, will make us; if we must know more than God teaches, nothing is more easy than to multiply the kind of wisdom we are after, at a rapid rate, by the inferences we may draw from the terms involved in the history. As Mary was the mother of Jesus, we can prove, beyond a question, that she was Mother of God. As Jesus is called a “man,” we can prove, as certainly, that he had a human soul; for what is a man without a soul? And, what is more, we

can prove, by as good an argument, that this soul was a person; for what is a soul that is not a person? And then it will be proved that there is no incarnation, but only a bi-personal and partnership transaction carried on between the man Jesus and the Word!

Indeed, it will be observed that a result very nearly equivalent to this always follows, as a matter of fact, when the formula, "two natures and one person," begins to be taken as affirming, in one nature, a substantial human soul or spirit; for the mind that has argued so far into the mystery will not be in a mood to stop, but will begin immediately to play the human soul into a distinct activity; conceiving that the human does this, the divine this, and so, in real truth or practically, running the two natures into two persons, directly contrary to the formula.

Or, if this be avoided, the whole matter of the life and passion of Christ will be tortured out of its value and even its dignity, by questions and arguments and dialectic quibbles, that are only continuances upon his gospel of the crucifixion perpetrated on his body. Thus, to give an example, we find Mr. Symington asserting, first, in his work on the Atonement, (p. 154,) that "Jesus had no personal existence *as a man*," which is proper orthodoxy; and then, shortly after, when the question rises, who suffers in the suffering death of Christ? we have the following dismally wise solution or answer:

"Although the human nature was alone capable of suffering, it was nevertheless the person, to whom this nature belonged, who suffered. It may be thought that, at this rate, as the person was divine, such an assertion

involves the blasphemy that Deity suffered. By no means. When a person suffers, it does not follow that he suffers in all that pertains to him. He may suffer in his property, and not suffer in his honor; he may suffer in his happiness, and not in his character; he may suffer in his body, and not in his soul; still it is the person who suffers. So in the case before us, while the Son of God suffers in his human nature, it is still the person that suffers."—(*Atonement*, p. 164.)

It is really mournful to see what shifts a mind must descend to, what inanities it must set up in the name of a gospel, when once it has gotten beyond the bounds of knowledge and begun to solve the impossible. It would not do to say that the suffering is in the human soul; for then the act of redemption would be of the human nature of Jesus. It would not do to say that the suffering is in the divine nature; for that would be a blasphemy against the impassibility of God. So it is imagined that the personality of Jesus is wholly divine, and then that this personality suffers, but only in the human nature,—just as a man may suffer in property not in honor, in happiness not in character, in body not in soul. The discovery that a person may suffer in body and not in soul, is one that quite supersedes the use of chloroform. The discovery that Deity the less really suffered, because Christ suffered only in the human nature, is not less remarkable. How plain, too, is it that the question as regards the impassibility of God, depended not on showing *where* the divine person suffered—whether in the human nature, or the moon, or some where else—but whether he suffered at all, or could, or can suffer any

how? To solve a difficulty by throwing it into a shuffle where no one can catch it; to argue that the one divine person suffers without divine suffering! because he suffers in the human nature! which is impersonal and can not suffer! and then to offer to the world, as the very essence of the gospel, a salvation purchased by the vicarious penal sufferings of the Son of God!—is reducing the gospel to a residuum of scholastic subtleties, which is likely enough, doubtless, to be hid in the world, but as unlikely as possible to be an active leaven of grace after it is hid.

How much better to say, 'Jesus, the God-man, is a mystery; as such, I perceive beforehand that no argument of mine, upon the mere terms of his person, will open their mystery to me. Be it mine simply to receive what he shows me. When he suffers, it is only a part of the mystery that he is man, and his form contradicts the deity of his nature as radically as his suffering does the divine impassibility. And why should I be staggered by these difficulties, when I see, beforehand, that God is going to prove himself in a way that includes them all? He will take care of his own relations to form and of his own impassibility better than I can. Possibly I know very little of either. Possibly it is the true idea of his impassibility, not that he is a rock, not that he knows all things and feels nothing, as a diamond receives the light without any sense of its touch; but that he feels intensely and, according to the depth of his own purity and tenderness, every thing done or thought in the universe; that when he is displeased he is really unpleased; that when he looks upon evil, he abhors it; when upon wrong, is

indignant against it; when upon real baseness, is moved by a real disgust, as true purity should be. And then it may be that, being passible thus to so many evils, there is in his goodness (is there not the same in all goodness?) a law of necessary self-compensation, such that infinite subtractions from his enjoyment are repaid by infinite additions, or conscious increments of joy, to which they are the occasions; and that so, what we call the impassibility of God, is based in an infinite passibility whose equilibrium of joy is maintained by the compensations of an infinite goodness, welling up evermore within, as waters of eternal life. And then, if it should be a real truth exemplified in the life and passion of Jesus, that God is subduing evil as he teaches me to do it, viz., by submission to its injuries, shall I refuse a lesson of so great value and sublimity? Is it nothing to me that, possibly, God is endeavoring here, in this mystery of Jesus, to accomplish what is scarcely done at all in the revelations of nature and Providential history, viz., to disclose to my feeling His own Passive Virtues, and bring me under their power?"

I am quite free to admit that, when the question has been up for settlement before the church, whether Christ had a human soul or not, the weight of opinion has been upon the affirmative side; and if one or the other must be held or decided, the decision has been rightly, or at least advantageously, turned on this side. For, if we say that there is no human soul in the person of the Savior, then we shall not use or find any place for using a large class of representations that present him on the human

or subject side of his mystery; and so the incarnation itself will vanish as a fact. While, on the other hand, if we say that he has a distinct human soul, all these terms will be used only with a violent over-speculative meaning. But while the current of authority has been upon this side, no other alternative being presented than whether he had a human soul or not, I am not aware that the question has ever been raised, in the past ages, whether, since Christ is wholly abnormal in his person, we are not on that account forbidden to undertake the decision of any such alternative, by arguments on words normally interpreted? If we decide that the question itself is an impossible question, forbidden by the conditions of the subject, then we shall go on to use and apply all the terms of the incarnate mystery, or those of both poles, (as to make out a real incarnation we must,) only we shall do it under a constant sense of the abnormal and uninvestigable nature of the fact. Thus it might have been decided very well, or with better effect, that the fire of the burning bush was real fire and not phosphorus; and yet the disciples of some following age might think it wiser not to meddle with that kind of question, but rather to see what it professes by so great a wonder to show, the presence of the God of Israel.

It appears also to have been decided, at the council of Constantinople, A. D. 680, that while there are two natures and one person in Christ, the two natures involve "two wills." But what is meant by two wills and one person I find some difficulty in conceiving. If it means that the two wills are active, choosing powers, then I see not how a better assertion of two persons can be made.

If it be meant simply that the creature will goes into composition as mere timber, or a part of the timber called nature, but has no action as a center of life and choice in itself, then it would seem to be a matter of very trivial consequence what it is, or what becomes of it; for it is lost in the infinite abyss of the divine nature into which it is fallen. Something like this appears to be the orthodox opinion; for it is distinctly maintained, as we just now saw, that the one personality of Christ is wholly divine, not partly divine and partly human,—this latter is expressly denied.

And yet, since the phrase "two wills" is admitted, it follows, by a kind of necessity, that many will be accommodated by seeing them in distinct action; and as soon as they begin to be spoken of in that manner, nothing can preserve them from being erected practically into two distinct persons, directly in the face of the older formula, "two natures and one person."

This exactly has been the practical result in New England. Indeed, I have no doubt that a great part of the hostility encountered or excited by what I have said concerning the person of Christ, is due to the fact that I hold the formula more faithfully and truly than it is commonly held in our churches. There had been no discussion of the subject for a long time, such as was necessary to sharpen the mind to a remembrance and true apprehension of the formula. The manner had been to speak of one thing in the life of Christ as referrible to the action or choice of his human, and of another to that of his divine nature; till finally, all guards and correctives being omitted, the churches had begun, really and prac-

tically, to hold a bi-personal Savior. Impressions thus taken up, directly against the orthodox formula, were crossed by the strong assertion I made of Christ's personal unity, in exact coincidence with it, and so I fell into an accusation of heresy, for no other reason than because I was more orthodox than I should be. Meantime what has befallen my accusers? Something far more deplorable, I answer, than a defect of orthodoxy. Having lost out of mind the distinction between a twofold nature and two distinct personal activities, their Savior is two, and not one any longer. Then all the strictly human incidents of childhood, obedience, poverty and suffering, they refer to his human side, as a distinct human experience; which being done, how little do they get afterward of all which God meant to communicate of Himself, through the incarnate life and death of his Son! They have lifted up their little taper of human reason to say of this, and this, and this, 'God can not be subject to any such thing; therefore it must be referred only to the humanity!' And so every thing most significant of God, every thing that unbosoms the divine feeling, is put away, sacrificed! The mystery itself is divided up and gone,—the man has taken one part to himself, the Word has taken the other back into the secret of God's pavilion, and God manifest, the Word made flesh, is not any longer here!

This result will always follow when the formula "two natures and one person" is taken speculatively; but if it be taken only in that instrumental and merely exterior way of which I have spoken, and the practical reality of all be considered to lie in what is expressed through the incarnate mystery, no such result will follow. Christ

will then be one person—only one. He can not be divided.

That the original authors of the formula held it in this untheoretic and practical way, I do not say or pretend, or even care to show. It is certainly my right to stop short of a merely theoretic and constructive judgment, which others have seen fit to pass upon the interior structure of the person of Christ, if I truly believe in the historic fact of his incarnation as presented in the gospels.

I will not undertake to sketch the history of the Christian doctrine on this subject. I will simply refer you to the doctrine as stated by two or three writers of accepted orthodoxy among ourselves, who do undoubtedly hold the formal belief of a real human soul in the person of Jesus Christ, but yet in such terms as to make the divine element of his person the all in all, even more absolutely than if they had taken the position of my book. Dr. Griffin says :

“Not a single official act can be ascribed to the mere man or to the mere God, but to the Mediator. Those acts in which the man most appears draw dignity and efficacy from the God, and those acts in which the God most appears draw influence from the man. The divinity of that person goes through and qualifies *all the acts and sufferings* of the Mediator, and when it has done that, it does no more in the economy of redemption.”—(*Griffin on Atonement*, p. 44.)

“The personality of Jesus Christ,” says Dr. Hopkins, “is in his divine nature, not in the human. Jesus Christ

existed a distinct divine person from eternity, the second person in the adorable trinity. The human nature which this divine person, the Word, assumed into a personal union with himself, is not and never was a distinct person by itself, and personality can not be ascribed to it, and does not belong to it, otherwise than as united to the Logos, the Word of God. The Word assumed the *human nature*, not a *human person*, into personal union with himself, by which this complex person exists, God-Man. Had the second person of the trinity taken a *human person* into union with himself, and this were possible, Jesus Christ, God and man, would be two persons and not one."—(*Hopkins' Divinity*, Vol. I., p. 348.)

Now let the question be raised, whether I or these two writers have made less of the human person of Christ? I in refusing to know any thing at all concerning it, other than that God is mysteriously incarnate in it; or they who, professing to open his mystery, discover there a "human nature," but "no human person," and that in such a way or under such conditions that the personality of Christ is "in the divine nature and not in the human." What a discovery now is this for theology! that Christ took a human nature that had no personality and is not any constitutive part of his own personality when taken, and never will have any humanly personal existence or character to all eternity! What is this, in fact, but to discover that the *matter of* a human creature has been somehow absorbed or hid in Christ's person, with which we can of course have no one feeling of personal sympathy, because it exists in the impersonal way, as being simply the matter of a man, and not a man? Which of

the two views gives our mind the liveliest *human* sympathy with the Savior's person? which brings him closest to our human feeling?—to receive him as containing in himself an impersonal man, the mere timber of a man, referring all he suffers to that unconscious, wooden humanity he has taken up to bear the cross and die as an impersonal sufferer; or, refusing all such vain philosophy, to receive him as the incarnate Word, one person, the great mystery of Godliness, and to say in simple childlike trust, at the foot of his cross, Herein is love—our God is love?

I am not ignorant how much importance has been attached to the belief in Christ's real humanity. It has even been regarded as a fundamental article of the Christian faith. For if Christ be taken as a mere show or theophany, having no real and historic place in humanity, then the gospel has no longer any solid import. It becomes a phantasm and nothing more. Do I then deny the real humanity, because I refuse, either to affirm or to deny, or to know any thing in regard to his interior composition; insisting that the incarnation shall be taken at its face, as a real historic fact, valuable for what it reveals of God, and not for the riddle it offers to metaphysical science? Is the gospel reduced to a phantasm because I am not able to show in Christ's person the matter of a man, who is not a man, and never will be, and who, at the best, is only an inconceivable something? Baxter had a better and more dignified conception of what is necessary to orthodoxy on this subject. Holding the belief, as he certainly does, that Christ assumed both a

human soul and a human body, though only "as substances," but not as "another person," he has still the dignity to say—

"This is a question [the question of three natures, a divine, a human soul and a human body,] about mere names. He hath only the nature of God and man. But if you go to *anatomize* man you may find in him, perhaps, more natures than two, spirit, fire, air, water and earth. But this is a frivolous dispute."—(*Practical Works*, fol. Vol. IV., p. 77.)

I think it must be clear to you then that I have fallen into no fundamental error, neither into any serious and important error concerning the person of Christ, whether in respect of what I have denied, or what I have asserted, concerning his humanity. On the contrary, I hope it will be seen that the attitude into which I bring the hearer and disciple is that of simple unquestioning faith itself, and precisely that which most favors the spiritual effect of the life and cross of Christ, as a medium of reconciliation with God.

But the report offered by the minority of your committee complained, as you may have observed, of a different kind of error in my view of Christ's person, and not the error of which I have been speaking; viz., that I rejected the "eternity" of his person. But this, you will perceive, was not any distinct error from that which the same report imputed to me, in charging a rejection of three eternal persons in the divine nature. It is only a multiplying of verbal charges against the same heresy, and a good illustration, in that view, of the

propriety of going deeper than the mere forms of words, in the investigation of truth.

There was a charge lying in the region of this which they have stated, which is really distinct from that of denying the trinity, and which might have been, as it actually has been, urged against me; viz., that my view involves a denial of the eternity of the human nature, or the glorified humanity of Jesus. I suppose this charge may have been provoked by the unsatisfactory reference I made ("God in Christ," p. 177) to certain language used by Paul in regard to the subject in question.

I can not say that I have no difficulty in framing a satisfactory conception of the doctrine of the glorified humanity, though I do not perceive that the difficulty experienced connects with any views I have taken up in regard to the incarnation, or the person of Christ, more than with the views of others. That theologian must be gifted with a remarkable facility of faith who has never yet found a difficulty in supposing, either that the one God, or that an eternal person of the Divine Three, the Son of God, underwent a permanent change of state before all worlds, in the year 1 of our Christian era; that in this particular speck of the system of the universe, at a certain date in the parish register, if I may so speak, of the town of Bethlehem, he entered into union with humanity, and is hereafter and forever to reign over the known universe of angels and all the populations of the sky, in the humanity then assumed and shortly after glorified.

Another difficulty in this doctrine of the glorified humanity is, that if by "glorified body" we mean a defi-

nite form under the terms and limitations of space, which is the very meaning of the word *body*, unless it be taken in some highly figurative sense, then it is manifestly impossible that so vast a multitude of souls, themselves also in bodies, can find an access to him, near enough to suffer a feeling of society, once in a thousand years. To avoid this difficulty, Baxter and others of the old writers imagine that Christ will inhabit a kind of ΑΠΑΥΓΑΣΜΑ, or sun-body—a human body so lustrous that it will be self-diffusive and fill heaven with its radiance. So in the hymn—

“There the blest man my Savior sits,
The God how bright he shines !
And scatters infinite delights
On all the happy minds !

But this, I confess, unless it be taken in some highly figurative sense, wears too much the appearance of a phantasm. And yet the scriptures seem to affirm, and of the truth itself I have no doubt, that in some proper and virtual sense, the Christ is to be eternal and be known *to us* as the glorified man or humanity. As to the precise manner, it is better to hold a position of modesty. It may be in some external sense, but we know so little of the matter of externals in the world of spirits, what “body” means, and “glorified body,” and “glorified humanity,” that it is better not to rush too boldly into those things we have not seen, lest we do it as they that are vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind. It may be in a way more subjective; for in one view God is a purely subjective reality in his manifestation to souls. Thus we may conceive that Christ, perfectly

formed within, is at once a character and a mold or retina of thought for God ; so that in all we may know of God, he will be to us a Christ. Somewhat as now, educated by science, we behold the sun as a rounded ball ; when, in fact, the light paints him in our eye as a circular plate only. But in whatever way it may come to pass, I have no doubt that in some most real and virtual sense, we shall see Christ and be with him. It will be, not as if we had some better and more complete abstractive notion of God, but as if he were humanized to us, known as the Christ, conversible with us, our Lord and brother, the Son of Mary glorified. And therefore, when we assert the glorified humanity of Christ's person, and do not press the language into a sense deeper than our understanding can penetrate, we assert, I certainly believe, a most real truth, and one that is justly dear to his disciples.

It may not be amiss to add, though it would seem to be quite unnecessary, that while the doctrine I have asserted refuses, either to deny or to affirm, to know or to attempt to know, any thing which the church doctrine establishes, concerning the human soul of Christ, by inferences drawn from the words "child," "man," "growth," and the like ; the difference is not one that will be observable at all in preaching, save when this particular point of dogma is immediately in question. Or, if there be a difference that might be observed, it will be simply that no distribution of the Savior's life is made, such as we sometimes hear—no reference of this to his human part and this to his divine ; but that all is referred, in

the manner of scripture, to his one mysterious person. He will be preached, not as "Christ divided," but as "God-with-us."

And yet, in order to this, the two poles that represent his one person, the divine and the human, will be always visible. Assuming that his character is one only, (which is the admitted truth of orthodoxy,) that one character will be set forth, under the paradox of a double character, instrumentally necessary to the right conception of it. The two elements, the divine and the human, will never be separated, but used simply as terms by which to represent a perfectly abnormal and mysterious unity—a being who was in the Form of God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men—where you see not two, not a God and a human soul, but one, who descends mysteriously in his own unity below himself, and is found in fashion as a man—the Word made flesh.

And it is in this view that the humanity of Christ is a truth so dear to men. It is not that a human soul is human, for all human souls are that, but that a nature transcending humanity is humanized and become one of us. And this is the truth that a preacher of Christ will magnify. He will begin his holy evangel at the infancy and childhood of Jesus; and instead of explaining away the beautiful wonder, by dividing the person and taking the childhood as pertaining separately to the humanity, he will rather preach the Divine Child himself, in the unity of his person, and pray, with Fenelon, that he and all men may be stripped of their wisdom

and become little children, before "the childhood of the Word made flesh."

In the same way Christ will be represented as a person temptible and tempted with us; endeared to us by his participation of our human state with all its infirmities and sorrows; made perfect through sufferings, and touched with a feeling of all that pertains to our lot of weakness and trial. The union perfected in him, too, of the human and divine, will be the more significant of the possible union of humanity with God, because the mind is not allowed to confuse itself in speculations about the interior duality of his constitution, which so nearly sunder his personality and dissipate our conviction of the reality of the union asserted.

Meantime, the duality of the terms or elements on hand will produce no necessary distraction of mind; for they are employed simply as an instrumental duality, and all questions about the interior relations of the divine and the human, as about the interior relations of the Trinity, will be put aside as philosophically forbidden. He may pay his worship, therefore, to the infant Jesus, with Fenelon, and suffer no misgiving or confusion of mind. Just as the large class of Unitarians who hold that Jesus is a being distinct from all other men, as being the pure manifestation of God, ought themselves to do, on their own principle, without hesitation or compunction. For if he is, in this manner, God manifest in the flesh, then certainly what is deific in him is principal above what is human—the highest, or we should rather say, the only reality for thought—and he ought to be unscrupulously worshiped.

THE TRINITY.

It seems to be supposed by many that what I advanced concerning the trinity, in my discourse at New Haven, was designed to be a solution of this great mystery. Precisely contrary to this, my attempt was to find a way of intelligent repose in it without a solution, and even subject to the conviction that no proper solution is possible. I did indeed seek to account for the external fact of trinity, showing that when God, the Absolute One, is revealed to us—the infinite in the finite, spirit in form, or subject, as the nature of language itself requires, to conditions of form—the process involves a necessity of antagonistic symbols and, if there be an incarnation, pluralities of person, such as meet us in the trinity of the New Testament. But having thus accounted for the external fact of a trinity, taken as instrumental in respect to the revelation of God, I insisted that we have now come to the last limit of possible investigation; that we can not pass over into the divine nature itself and show how the instrumental three of revelation are related to its interior distribution, or precisely what they affirm concerning it. Probably their object is, under and by means of the manifold, to give us the One, or to show us the One as engaged in forms of action needful to our redemption from sin; not to inform us concerning the transcendent properties and distributions of the divine substance as related to problems of metaphysical science.

Probably the revelation thus offered us in the Christian trinity has a considerable part of its value, in the fact that it can not be definitely solved, and sets Him before us under a veil of mystery; for, as nothing that is infinite can be definite, so mystery is a necessary dynamic of expression for the infinite.—(*God in Christ*, pp. 175-7.)

Just here, too, in withholding from any attempt to solve the trinity, and refusing either to affirm or to deny any thing concerning it, as pertaining to the substance or the immanent properties of God, is the peculiarity—the merit if there is any, the heresy if there is none—of the exposition I have ventured to offer. It differs, in this view, from Sabellianism on one side, and common orthodoxy on the other, in the same manner, being an attempt to forestall the controversy between them; a controversy that is endless, for the simple reason that the subject of it is impossible. In the same way, it proposes to anticipate and cut off nearly all the opposing theories of trinity, heretical and otherwise, that have agitated so deeply the peace of the church; for they all arise from the attempt to settle a conception of trinity as pertaining immanently to the interior nature of God—an attempt, the certain futility of which, it would seem that a very little reflection might assist any one to discover.

I spoke, in my Introduction, of a certain coincidence between the view of trinity I advanced at New Haven, and that of Schleiermacher, in his exposition of Sabellius; and some have supposed, I perceive, that I meant to accept, with him, the doctrine of a modal trinity. I ought to have traced the limits of the coincidence and shown

precisely where my doctrine escapes the charge of modalism. Thus, if it is set in comparison with Schleiermacher's on one side, and the orthodox modification of it demanded by Prof. Stuart on the other, it will be found that we have three different schemes of trinity, which begin together, at the assumed fact of God's original unity, and then, by a consideration of what is involved in revealing Him to men, or working the redemption of men, arrive at the resulting fact of a trinity—three grammatic persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, representing, all, to our human conception, the *Homousion*, or One Substance. Meeting at this point, we immediately fall asunder into results that are mutually repugnant.

Schleiermacher and his translator both assume the possibility of entering into the interior nature of God, and forming an authorized judgment concerning the trinity as predicable of it. This I deny, and am thus left behind by them both. The judgment of the German critic is that the One becomes Three in the process of revelation, and that the Three are *only* media of revelation. This is modalism. His translator, on the other hand, argues that, since God is revealed as being three, he must be essentially or immanently three back of the revelation; else the revelation would not be true. This is admitted orthodoxy. Twisten, I may add, handles the doctrine much in the same way, only that he arrives at the point of threeness by a more transcendental method, considering not so much what is involved in the revelation of God to us, as in his revelation to Himself.

Left behind thus by them both, I am found simply protesting against all judgments and inferences that un-

dertake to leap the gulf between us and the inscrutable mystery of God, insisting that we stay by the Scripture and trust ourselves to *no* constructive reasonings on the subject,—that the trinity of revelation is given us for use and not for theory; that we can not know exactly where form ends, or how much to refer to form, in a matter so transcendent; that any attempt to solve or conceive God's interior mystery, by reasonings cast in the molds and categories of our human consciousness, is presumptuous, possibly even absurd; an attempt, also, to clear that mystery, which it may have been one of the very objects of Scripture to present, as being itself the medium and highest power of expression for the infinite. Therefore, I said, let us stay by the simple Three of revelation, receiving them, not as addressed to our scientific instinct, but under the simple conditions of expression; sending and sent, acting and interacting, so, by their discursive method, meeting our discourse of thought, and communicating, by their accommodation to our capacity, what they may of the divine glory and love.

You perceive, in this manner, that my supposed heresy is distinguished, in the same way, both from modalism and immanent trinity. One enters into the field of God's interior nature and denies, the other enters and affirms. I have supposed it to be a demand even of reason, and certainly to be more modest, to withhold altogether; seeking after God in the simple *use* of that by which he is offered to knowledge. The incurious method I have supposed to be more intelligent here than the curious, the practical than the speculative; that feeling and imagination are sometimes good interpreters and proper inlets

of knowledge; and that we are never so likely to miss the true import of this transcendent mystery, as when we are thrusting ourselves into God's interior distributions, and preparing a psychology of his Infinite Spirit in the tiny molds of our discursive understanding.

The advantages pertaining to such a disposition of the subject are many.

First, it is a solution, just so far as a solution is wanted. It finds reason to believe, assuming the strict unity of God, that He will be revealed under conditions of form and number; the Absolute by relatives, or, in case of an incarnation, by relative persons. Then, when the scripture trinity appears, the disciple is not shocked by a raw absurdity thrust upon Him. This trinity, coupled with so many speculative difficulties, is at least no proof against the fact of a revelation; for it is just what might be expected, in case a revelation is made. He has also perceived that a trinity of persons thus appearing is developed, one side of mere logical conditions, and is not to be handled by logical deductions. As soon, therefore, as men cease to be occupied with the relative subjects, or persons, as media of expression,—presentations of God to simple faith and love,—and begin to raise a priori constructions on their formal relations of act, and work, and number, he clearly perceives that there should be and will be no end to the conflicts and resulting contraries of doctrine that appear, and will not be troubled, of course, by them, when they do appear. The unity of God is to him a truth fixed and immovable, and he is not concerned lest, in receiving as much of God as he

can through the revelation given, he should somehow accept a logical absurdity. He has only to receive the Divine Three in terms of love and worship, using them freely as media of thought concerning God and the way of His redeeming mercy, and so to ascend, through formulas of blessing and doxologies of praise, to the fullest embrace possible of the incomprehensible One.

Secondly, it is another advantage of the view I have suggested that, while it holds the mind to a practical use of the trinity, it allows and provokes to the highest activity of thought concerning God. Nothing strains the human mind to such tensity as a riddle or mystery, when that riddle or mystery is not a fiction, but is based in the depth of some stupendous reality. And for just this reason it is that the trinity of Scripture has availed to make the nature of God a problem of so great interest to the human mind for the last eighteen centuries. Such a strain of human thought after God and his transcendent mystery could have been kept up by no other means. And the result has been that, while nothing has been gained as regards the real comprehension or solution of the mystery—that while so many heresies and confutations and determinations of councils, so much labor of logic and scholastic learning, so many divinations of mysticism, so many theories of ontology and transcendental philosophy, have ended in just no solution or doctrine of the subject that can hope for general acceptance—there has yet resulted such a lifting of the range and such an expansion of the circle of thought concerning God, as more than compensates the immense labor it has cost. The very confusion we complain of is, in one view,

but another name for fertility. And what we have thus attained, we should never have begun to seek, had only the simple Jewish conception of divine unity been given us. We owe it all to the amazing riddle thrown out to the mind of the world, in the Christian trinity. And it is one of the highest merits of the Christian expression of God under a threefold personality, that it would not allow the mind of the world to rest any longer in a conception so easy to thought and, in fact, so nearly finite; but compelled a new toil of exploration, and thus conducted to a new sense of the possibilities included in God and the mystery of infinite being.

Now, the effort of the church has been and still is, though not so intended, to stop exactly that which it has been the merit of the Scripture trinity to be doing. Could some science of the trinity, or of God's immanent distribution, be perfected and established in a fixed form of dogma, so that nothing more would be left us but to run over the logical terms and hear what they say, then manifestly the labor of the world's mind would rest and the process of fertility be ended. And not only so, not only would God never be greater to thought, but there would begin to be a wave of retrocession, a subsidence of thought to a lower level. Since the dogma is, in that case, an end of question, thought receives it without question; and then, having God by rote, He becomes to mind as lifeless as mind is lifeless to Him; as much diminished in volume, too, as thought is diminished in the strain of its intensity. Accordingly, just that is wanted, which the church has been trying, in all ages, to escape, viz., to keep the trinity an open question forever,—pre-

cisely where the scriptures leave it,—to undertake no science of God's interior nature and immanent properties, but to hold the Sacred Three as instrumental verities, the truest and most adequate expression of God's reality possible; leaving room for thought to make its explorations and climb into the knowledge of God by such feeling after his mystery, as mystery will tempt, and freedom suffer, and faith assist. Precisely this is the position where my doctrine leaves us; and, in this, it has its advantage equally over modalism and orthodoxy, and all ontological and transcendental theories. It meets, indeed, the very candid and wise suggestion of Twisten, at the close of his treatise, when he says:—

“It may easily become a consequence of such definite doctrinal propositions that, while they guard against error, they also restrain the free movements of mind and establish a dead uniformity, in place of a living and manifold development; and, on this account, those times in which men were endeavoring to approach the truth in different ways, though they may have been sometimes by-ways and false ways, seem more attractive than those in which they believed they had attained the goal and must keep precisely to the leveled track. And if any one now longs for a return of this earlier freedom and mobility, in the belief that then the interest in our doctrine would be far more fresh and living than it is with the constant repetition of the same traditional forms of speech; if he believes that he must seek after, or has found another mode of exhibiting it, which corresponds as well or better with the scriptures and with Christian experience; which is less exposed to misapprehensions;

which is more free from doubt and objections; which insures more profound disclosures, or at any rate is more simple; shall we then put him off by merely holding up in opposition the doctrine of the church? This would be to act neither in the spirit of our church, which never puts the inferences and deductions of men on a line with the words of scripture; nor in a truly philosophical spirit, which can not give the same authority to that which is the result only of our reflections, with that which forms a part of our religious experience."—(*Bib. Sac., Vol. IV., p. 66.*)

Thirdly, it is a great advantage of this view, that it gives the law of use, and shows exactly where to deposit the mystery of the Divine Three, as offered to us in the scriptures. Christ, the Son, is declared, in many ways or distinct modes of assertion, to be God manifest under human conditions, and even to have the very fullness or pleroma of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily. The trinity, also, is first brought to the knowledge of our race in immediate connection with this divine appearing or incarnation. Hence, almost of necessity, we look upon the development of the Three as occurring under the same conditions of manifestation, and as part of the same general transaction. Meantime, considering what is implied in God's Infinity as the One, and what is implied in his revelation to men, as possible only through finite forms and symbols, we clearly perceive, beforehand, that when he is revealed, it will be under pluralities and relative terms or conditions, answering to these which meet us in the scripture Three. Here, then, is the law of use, in which we are to be always comforted,—that in

the Three, freely accepted, we receive the One, and nothing contrary to the One. The highest reality and truth of the Three is, that they manifest and are the One; and whatever we receive, in the trinity set forth, that is not a knowledge or impression of the One, is a residuum of form and number that belongs to the medium and vehicle of truth, and not to the truth itself.

But exactly what, in all respects, belongs to the vehicle and what to the truth, we do not undertake to affirm. Here we come upon the proper domain of mystery, having a perfectly intelligent knowledge prepared of its locality and its confines. We are not simply overtaken by darkness, or driven to a corner whence we can not escape, save by calling on Mystery to help us; but we meet her in the place of intelligence, and greet her as an acquaintance. For we have seen beforehand that the relation of form to truth in every term of language is a mystery quite insoluble, and now we only meet a particular example of the same fact. We perceive, too, beforehand, that the infinite, when revealed in the finite, must be enveloped in mystery. Besides, the nature of God is different from ours, in such a sense that we manifestly can not form the interior conception of God as the One, and never can tell how much of threeness to refer to the vehicle, in distinction from the reality signified. The categories of the Infinite Mind are not matched by the categories of thought in ours; and therefore, when we affirm God's oneness, we have no certainty how much it includes, but only that all is included in one consciousness. It may be that, in certain respects, it would be closer to the reality for us to affirm an interior threeness

in God, than to say that he is a simple unity in our strictly *human* sense, or the sense of our finite personality. It certainly is more true for us, to take the Three as they are offered, and let them throw us into a maze by their cross relations; and in that maze, if we are in it in faith, longing only to be filled with God, we shall receive the largest possible communication of Him, as a being who can not be placed in the categories of our finite understanding. We shall have Him thus dynamically, or in virtual impression, when we can not make out a proper intellectual conception of Him. Here, then, when we come to the question, what is vehicle and what is truth, we neither affirm nor deny; but we say, here is the place for mystery, and she meets us only where the place for meeting is. We are not offended; we receive her gladly; perceiving in her shaded face and lineaments that, as she is the mother of Modesty, she is the sister also of Truth.

But are there no disadvantages and dangers, it will be asked, in the position taken, such as more than offset the advantages? Does it not open a gate of free entrance for all those real heresies that corrupt Christian experience and palsy the nerve of the gospel, yielding them countenance and offering them a charter of immunity? It seems to me to be quite otherwise; for while it brings us to a resting-place in the simple expression of the scripture formula, it does not, by any means, set us back at the point where the heresies began to emerge. For it happens that almost all the heresies or misconstructions referred to were gendered, by just that effort to comprehend the interior mystery of God's nature, the necessary

futility of which I have made it a point of so great consequence to admit.

How Sabellianism or modalism is avoided we have already seen. In its ancient original type, it did not really seize upon the true reason for the threefold form ; and in the modern German type of the doctrine, as well as in the ancient, it errs by excessive denial ; not stopping within the limit of possible knowledge, but assuming to know what is *not* true of God's interior nature, where it has no means of knowledge.

Arianism, the most improbable and unphilosophic of all the great heresies, begins and ends in the attempt to get up, apart from all laws of thought, some probable or possible conception of the trinity, as pertaining to the interior metaphysical history of being. And the very search on which it enters is anticipated by the simple recollection, that a complete revelation of the Infinite One, and especially the incarnate manifestation of his presence, involves a plurality of terms, and probably of persons. What need, then, of inquiring whether the Son, admitted to be incarnate, is some highest imaginable, or unimaginable creature?—what place is left for the inquiry?

Unitarianism is not excluded, in so far as it adequately maintains the divine unity, and should not be. Many of its arguments, taken as alleged against certain forms of immanent trinity called orthodox, are admitted and justified. None of the real absurdities against which it has arrayed itself are allowed to remain. And yet they are cleared, by a method that makes no breach upon the scripture trinity, it has rejected or explained

away ; a method which affirms the real use and sacred importance of that trinity, and maintains the essential divinity of the Son of God, as a conception necessary to the vital energy of the gospel in its reconciling power. Indeed, if it be true that multiplicity is involved in the highest expression of God as the One, Unitarianism is seen to be engaged in the same futile effort with orthodoxy when it enters and attempts to clear the interior mystery of the scripture Three, and so to have its root in the same vicious assumption.

I shall speak of pantheism in another place, only observing here that a faith in God's personality, as distinct from the world, is adequately asserted only by means of tri-personality ; and it does not appear to make any difference, in this respect, whether it be by one view of tri-personality or another, provided will and counsel and supernatural working are involved in it. After all, there is no real security any where that God will be held as a person, save that a personal God is *wanted*. For if a World-God only is wanted, as the animal wants only a world to graze in, the mind will be as little likely to raise itself to any thing above the world, waiting to return its sympathies and feed its longings after friendship. Argument will be impotent where no such longings exist.

Having exhibited, in this manner, the import and advantages of the position I designed to maintain, it may further assist you, if I notice briefly some of the constructions that have been given to expressions found in my book,—as by the minority of your committee, and by

others who have been forward to complain of my heresies. And I will say, in general, that most of the complaints I have heard originate in a want of attention to the restrictions and qualifications I gave, in the latter part of my discourse. It would have been very inconvenient, in a crowded and condensed discourse, to append all these qualifiers to each and every turn of language that might suffer an evil construction. I supposed it would be enough to give them once, and that my hearer, or my reader, would regard it as the proper function of intelligence, to reproduce my view *as a whole*, under and subject to my own qualifications; and not to manufacture another for me, out of my particular turns of expression, apart from all qualifications. But, instead of this, I have sometimes observed that a sentence is cut in two, and the limitation of the end, which alone made it true to me, is taken away. Sometimes, also, a bold stroke of inference is added, making me assert exactly what I deny, because I deny the inference. And very generally, the qualifications and disclaimers I added at the close, appear to have been disregarded. Let me show you then, by a few examples, how little thought I have had of asserting some of the heresies imputed to me.

I spoke (p. 175) of "an instrumental trinity, or trinity of three instrumental persons," as "the positive" result to which my doctrine was brought. Hereupon it is set down as my heresy, that I deny any thing in the nature of an immanent trinity. And yet the very tenor of my argument required me *not* to deny it, and I said expressly, "there may be more in it than this,"—adding that, whenever any human theologian should become

sufficiently master of God's interior psychological nature, to declare his mystery, he would be able to tell us.

I said (p. 177) "three simply as related to our finite apprehension," which, it has been often charged, is an express denial of any threeness of a more immanent or inherent quality. Whereas I was only saying, as it will be seen by a reference backward, that if we cease from all denials and guesses, and speak in "a way more positive," as of what we *do* know, then the Three are, at least, "instrumentally three,—three [that is] simply as related to our finite apprehension." I am glad, however, to admit that, while my language here need not, and, against the plainest declarations elsewhere made, ought not to have been misunderstood, it might have been more guarded.

So when I spoke of the Three (p. 137) as "the *dramatis personæ* of revelation," and of trinity as resulting "of necessity from the revelation of God to man," or the incarnation of the divine nature; did I therefore, as it has been often charged, deny that they are any thing more than a dramatic show?

It has been charged as an offense that I speak of the Word as being a peculiar "capacity of self-expression in God." The language is a denial, it is said, of the real personality of the Son. I certainly supposed that every Christian scholar was so far acquainted with the historic doctrine of the Logos, as to know that so much is conceded, on all hands, and that when I spoke in this way, I was only referring to the fact thus conceded, that there is, at the least, a something in the divine nature called the Word, which is the fountain (whatever may be said

of personality) of all the forms of things, and, in that sense, the medium of the creation of the worlds; something which is to the outward, in expression, what the inward life of God is to his being—a Form of God, a Mirror of Creative Imagination, in which he beholds and through which he may body forth images of his thought, or an “express image of his person.” Precisely this, too, you will see, in due time, was a constant mode of speaking under ancient Nicene orthodoxy itself. Did I then deny the personality of the Word, or Son, by accepting, for the time, this radical idea common to all modes of conceiving the Logos? Assuming this as a first point, or root of genesis, did I not afterward find him invested with at least a necessary form of personality; speak of him as an agent, or logical subject; and even vindicate the use of the word *person* (p. 174) as applied to the Son? Did I not expressly say that I only refused to affirm his personality in a sense that can not be investigated and never was defined?

I objected (p. 112) to the argument by which Prof. Stuart infers that, since a revelation of the One involves plurality, there must be an “equivalent” threeness back of the revelation to support its truth; because, by a vicious inversion, it sends a conclusion back to alter and amend its premise—and even to prove the insufficiency of the argument by which it was itself produced. Therefore I deny, it is charged, the fact of any threeness back of the revelation. I should think it might easily be seen that I was objecting simply to a particular mode of argument, which attempts to bridge the gulf between us and God’s interior mystery of being, by a mere sophism.

I objected also (pp. 178-9) against the old scholastic attempt, renewed by Neander, Twisten, and others among the Germans, to find a triad in human consciousness, and by that to solve the trinity of God. I even spoke of it with a degree of disrespect, as being a way to lose one's "discretion;" for I can not resist the impression that it is one of those excesses of over-speculation, which indicate a beginning of mental disease, and which are the frequent infirmity of great scholars. When now it is remembered that my position required me to controvert all arguments which either prove or disprove an immanent trinity, could I not be understood here also as objecting simply to the argument? Must I be taken as denying any trinity in God's interior nature, because I can not find a trinity as real in my own?

You may perceive in these specifications, how the principal charges of heresy against my doctrine of trinity originated, and by what proofs they are sustained. So little exercised are many in the relations of form to truth, so little apprised of the almost substantial consequence of form, that when I propose to hold the scripture trinity as an instrumental verity, it can not be imagined that I mean any thing by it, as a trinity within the bounds of intelligence, because I do not affirm (and as little deny) a trinity transcending intelligence. And so great, if I may judge, is their impatience with a doctrine that does not fall within their theologic method, that the explanations by which I sought to put them in my point of view, and the guards I set to save my doctrine from offense, are either disregarded or peremptorily disallowed me. To such I have only to say that, when they will condescend

to allow me the possession of my own doctrine, guarded by my own qualifications, they will be troubled by fewer heresies.

But we need to go deeper into the question of trinity itself than we have done in these explanations ; for the sketch I gave in my discourse at New Haven can not be rightly estimated, apart from the reasons by which I was determined in presenting it. I propose, therefore, not a new discussion, but to take up a few single points in the field of trinity and exhibit the scope of my heresy as related to these.

I. THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. In all efforts to form an adequate conception of God as the Absolute Being, there is a tendency to sink the personal element, because our idea of person, being derived from ourselves, is essentially finite and God is infinite. Hence a struggle after the infinite is so far a struggle to get away from ourselves and the notion of personality derived from ourselves.

To form a distinct and simply positive conception of God is impossible. We can only approximate the conception of Him. And we do it by a double process ; first positive, then negative. We take up certain elements found in our own personal consciousness, impute them to God, and then, to save his infinity, deny them again—not conceiving exactly how much we mean by the denial, or what that Positive Infinite is whose infinity requires the denial. Thus advert-ing to our own consciousness, we discover *will* as an attribute of our personality, and this we ascribe, in the

positive, to God. But we recollect, as we do it, that will, in us, is a power of new determination; that is, of determining something before undetermined. It is the agent of a volition issued in time. Does God then put forth new purposes, determine himself to new issues or choices? No. God's purposes and issues of choice are eternal, not of yesterday. Like his being itself, we must conceive that they *eternally were*. He never puts forth an act which before was undetermined, and therefore, in that sense, determines himself to nothing. And yet, without determining the mind to something before undetermined, we can not find, in ourselves, what an act of will is—it is nothing. And thus, in the very act of attributing will to God, as being an element found in our own personality, we are seen taking back also, in order to make out his infinity, just what we began to attribute. We so far negative what we find in ourselves, that its human characteristic seems to vanish.

So if we impute *thought* to God, drawing out another conception from our own consciousness, we are still obliged, on consideration, to add that God has no new thoughts, or successions of thoughts, never brings into mind something that before was out of mind, never passes transitionally or by mental discourse [*discursus*] from one thought to another; for, being infinite, all thought must be in him at once and from eternity. Which is about the same, again, as denying that he thinks at all.

So if we impute deliberation, reasoning, invention, memory, emotion, to God, (God in Christ, pp. 138–9,) we must yet add negatives to save his infinity, that seem

at least formally to annihilate the very qualities assigned to him. Even when we refer to God moral ideas and excellences, in respect to which we have the strongest conviction of a necessary coincidence in all moral beings, we have there to interpose negations scarcely less remarkable. Thus, if we impute truth to him, what we mean by truth, in ourselves, is what we attain to by right seeking and hold in propositions or formal conceptions; but truth is in God as immediate light from eternity, without search, in no formal connections of subject and predicate, and no necessary clothing of symbol. If we impute goodness, what we mean by goodness in ourselves, is an attainment and a result of exercise; but the goodness of God is original, prior to all exercise, eternal and complete in its own nature.

What now shall we do? how shall we conceive God? Regarding him as the Absolute Being existing in himself and affirmed before himself, the infinite I AM—what conception shall we frame of him? One of two things will be done—we shall either not make these negations, or we shall make them.

If we do not make them, if we simply project elements found in our own consciousness outward, and call them God, adding, perhaps, the simple epithets *infinite*, *omniscient*, and the like, as magnifiers, endeavoring thus a conception of God wholly positive, the result will be that we have only a God subject to human categories; personal enough, doubtless, because he is of the genus Man—easily represented and conceived, because he falls within our human categories; but, for just that reason, no such person as meets, at all, the conditions of divine

existence. He is the God of Priestly, a merely humanish, comprehensible unity, sometimes called philosophic, because it is just small enough to accommodate the petty molds of our speculative understanding.

If the negatives just specified are added, then comes almost certainly a different result, an impersonal God—the sleeping Brama of the East, or the pantheistic IT of the German schools. For, in ascribing so many negatives of conscious personality in ourselves, the mind falls off into the conception, or no-conception, of some grand Abyss or Womb of Eternity, or TO HAN, and the notion of a Living God is lost. In this view, Braminism appears to be a faithful proof of what the profoundest philosophic study and deepest search of man can effect, in the effort to conceive, in a merely speculative way, the Absolute Being.

Precisely here is opened to our discovery the real value and power of the Christian trinity, as a supernatural revelation of God. To prevent our diminishing the One and conceiving Him to be only a man with magnifiers annexed, as in the feeble, undivine notion of a philosophic unity, it presents a Three. To shut away, at the same time, the second error—that which, to escape the first, turns itself toward the doctrine of the Bramins and conceives Him to be only a vast impersonal abyss, or platitude; or, with the modern pantheists, to be the unconscious principle of an eternal Cosmos—it presents three Persons. And so the Christian trinity, by its two elements of number and personality, holds us to a strain of thought after God, both as *transcending* the categories of our human understanding and as *personal* in his relations and character.

. But just here rises the great question of Christian theology, viz., what shall be thought of the persons? Most Christian teachers frankly confess that they do not understand the interior personality of the persons; and yet they will press on the word, so as virtually to insist that there are three distinct agents asserted as existing in the divine nature; three persons having a personality that is constituted under and within the same categories of will, thought, emotion, and the like, by which our human consciousness is distinguished. God is now three magnified men instead of one; but if such a trinity of finites, acting in cross relations with each other, may suffice to save the mind from lapsing into a conception of God as one finite, which is a very little lower, the gain will be more than balanced by the increased distraction of mind thus produced. This conception of God is, in fact, the most difficult that can be formed, and so far, at least, the most inadequate.

Suppose, then, we take the persons as instrumental persons and refuse to inquire farther; persons who, by acting and interacting in so many ways before us, ways, too, so intensely and humanly personal, will avail in this manner to fill our human molds of thought, and touch us with senses of God in every part—thus to give us a being out of our finite range of quality or personal consciousness, and yet personal.

The case may be faintly illustrated in the following manner. Conceive that a plane, or platitude, is a living conscious being,—conscious, of course, of what it is or what is in it, and of nothing more. It has no categories of thought, save what belong to it as a plane. Given now

the problem, to make the plane know or conceive a solid. By the supposition, weight, resistance, color, and other like properties of solids, can not enter into the conception given. Nothing obviously can be done, but to reveal or expose to the plane the inclosing planes of the solid; or to inform it, which is the same thing, that a solid is so many planes thus and thus related; for it can not be said that a solid is matter contained or bounded by the planes, because, by the supposition, the inquiring plane has no idea of matter, and no power of conceiving it. But now the instructed plane begins immediately to arrange a speculative science of solids, and lays it down as a certain article of knowledge that so many planes are themselves the essence, or essential properties of a solid. Would it not be wiser in this plane to be more of a disciple and less of a philosopher? to look intently on the planes presented, take them as hints of some profound reality in the solid which it can not definitely think; and then, since it can not receive into its one plane of intelligence the full conception of a solid, be grateful that it is able to get some very faint impression of this nobler kind of being through so many surfaces?

In precise keeping with this illustration, Luther declares that "Reason [as related to God] is like a line which touches the whole sphere, but only at one point, and does not grasp the whole." And then he answers not less wisely than wittily for the trinity revealed to faith, by saying:—"When logic objects to this doctrine, that it does not square with its rules, we must say, '*Mulier taceat in ecclesia.*'" Just so (reverting to our comparison) when a human soul meets the revelation of God, who, as the

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Infinite One, is certainly not within his plane of human thought and conception, and finds Him represented by three persons, which, as forms of thought and conception, are within his plane, would it not be more adequate and wiser to accept these persons rather as surfaces of the Infinite Person, boundaries and types of thought inclosing the vast unknown of solid being, otherwise only a dark, impersonal, unrepresentable abyss? And then, if he continues to say, chanting it ever as the doxology of praise and worship, 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' professing it as his faith that God is three persons and one substance,—is it better for him to say it holding them as planes of description, or to settle it by wise deductions of logic that the planes are the very interior matter and chemistry of the substance? I have said, "the former." Our common orthodoxy answers, "the latter"—in which it gives me an impression, I can not resist, of some very defective, insufficient conception of God. If Unitarianism and Orthodoxy, both professing, in words, the incomprehensibleness of God, could fully admit such a truth, and could positively see that He is a being out of our plane, and cognizable by us only through approaches in that plane; this whole matter of trinity would immediately clear itself to them, as regards any real difficulties heretofore experienced by them or between them, and become to both alike a most welcome and wondrous discovery of God. They would not glue themselves to the notion of God as person, whether one or three, conceiving the word *person* to hold just the meaning it carries in our plane, or under the categories of our human consciousness; but they would accept the term in a sense

more tropical, as being a vehicle that imports into our measures a somewhat that is above our measures; a lens that gathers some few rays of the Infinite Pleroma of God, and brings them to a luminous center within our finite apprehension and before our personal feeling. This Infinite Pleroma, which, if they try to conceive it as such, thins away to a mere impersonal, unsocial platitude, becomes, when revealed in a triad of persons, each to be embraced in turn, or all together, effectually personal and possible to their love, while yet effectually infinite; and then, if so great a paradox troubles, at times, their speculative instinct, their experience will hear a voice answering out from under the cloud: "That ye might be filled with all the FULLNESS of God."

Have we not the secret reason here, why it is sometimes a relief to us to avoid the personal term 'God' and speak in the neuter, calling him to *Æon*, or the 'God-head;' the effort being, at such times, to escape a certain sense of limitation in a word of personality? Is it not also a fact, and for the same reason, that, where trinity is rejected and the single term 'God' is employed as necessary to a proper conception of the Divine Unity, the word gradually loses volume and tone, and, by the time a single generation has passed, begins to connect a sense of disappointment? The element of personality, which is a formally finite conception, triumphs over the spiritual dignity of the word, no longer supported by terms of antagonism, and it dwindles painfully in its competence. And then it will not be strange, if the class of literary freethinkers break out of their imprisonment and begin to speak familiarly of 'the Gods.' It is only to be hoped

that, in what we look upon as the willing perversity of their genius, they will not repair their loss of a Trinity by embracing a classic Pantheon.

II. THE UNITY OF GOD. I began at this point, in my view of the trinity given at New Haven, holding it as a radical assumption which must not be violated, and conceding that any doctrine of tri-personality, by which the trinity and "simplicity," or "strict simplicity" of God is violated, must be false. The words "simplicity" and "strict simplicity" were added to give emphasis to the word "unity," which has become so nearly ambiguous, from the frequent looseness of its application; for it is affirmed as readily by those who assert a doctrine of plain tritheism, as by the Unitarians themselves. My design was to assume and resolutely to hold the "one substance" or real unity of God. I conceived him as a properly individual being, included under one simple consciousness. And my argument was that, being one, or being thus assumed to be one, plurality of number and person will be involved in the process of his revelation and the work by which he redeems the world.

At the same time, I carefully disclaimed any intention, whether by affirmation or denial, to undertake the interior psychology of the persons, only insisting, whatever else may be true, that they be received as the One. Their contents; their relations to each other; their root of connection, taken as external, with the one substance; their precise mode of being the one substance,—all questions pertaining to the interior of the divine mystery I refused to investigate, as being, to us, impossible subjects.

It may have seemed to some of you that, in assuming the unity, in a manner so unqualified and peremptory, I virtually assumed a knowledge concerning the interior nature of God quite as impossible to be verified or investigated. But I think you will find, on a closer inspection of my doctrine, that I left room here for as much of ambiguity, or uncertainty, as our necessary ignorance requires.

I explicitly rejected, and without scruple it is true, the doctrine of three consciousnesses, wills, understandings, and the like; not, however, because I assumed our ability to know exactly what may or may not be contained in God's interior unity, but because it is impossible *for us* to admit such a threeness of person, and retain any real belief in the divine unity at all. For if there be to us any thing essentially monadic and sole, it is the being, or, if more than one, the beings, included under and bounded severally by a personal consciousness.

I rejected, as peremptorily, the doctrine of three distinct sets of attributes inhering in a common substance; partly because it involves the same difficulties, and partly because it only aggravates the difficulties it thinks to remove. For the sets of attributes are conceived, each and all, to be persons and not mere fascicles, and the common substance must be also as really a person, else it is only a platform of clay; and then, when the four persons begin to act—to send, go, think, suffer, descend, ascend, and the like, which is the matter to be explained—how will one set of attributes send another, or the person-general send any one of its three extra sets of attributes, without putting them on a distinct action that is not of,

or possible, to the common substance? This theory is too clumsy and mechanical, and certainly too inefficient to serve any useful purpose.

Did I then, or do I assume to know exactly what may be included in God's interior, metaphysical unity, because I venture to reject, with so little scruple, theories manifestly impossible to us? Contrary to this, you will see that I rejected with as little scruple (pp. 176-8) the only conception of divine unity that is properly comprehensible within our molds of thought, and that for the simple reason that it is so, viz., the Deistic and Socinian conception of a philosophic unity.

It will also be seen that, in refusing to determine how, or at what point, the external three of revelation become the interior one of being, or the one substance, I professed exactly as much ignorance of the unity as of the threeness; ignorance of one, at this point, being ignorance also of the other; for just as much more or less essential and immanent as the persons are in the divine nature, just as much less or more interiorly capable of number is the unity of the divine nature. And no one certainly will imagine that, in affirming the unity and strict simplicity of the divine nature, I excluded every possibility or possible ground of number in it; for all number has its ground, more or less immanently, there. All distinctions of law, order, form, genus, family, have their root in God—not in his will merely, but in the distribution of his interior, eternal, necessary intelligence. What thoughtful soul, cleared of dullness toward what is familiar, and turned in its pure longings every way to search after God, has not sometime paused in a deep

maze of bewilderment over the fact of bisexual existence universally observed in the living world, imagining what ground there may be, or not be, in God for such a distribution of organic life? It can not be said that there was *no* ground for it, save in the act of will by which it was appointed; for, in order to be willed, it must first be thought, and it could only be thought from eternity, the thoughts of God being, in some sense, necessary and coeval with his being. But if a distribution of God's visible work, so general and comprehensive, implies no correspondent distribution in his nature itself, we discover how little it means, or may, to say that any thing has a ground in God's nature,—how little, that is, in respect to the essential composition or distribution of his nature.

That there is some *threefold* ground in the divine nature, back of the Christian trinity, I was most careful not to deny. I only denied what some, with a most blamable presumption, have dared to affirm concerning it. The unity of God is itself a great deep, not merely in the fact that it supports a trinity, but quite as much in the fact that all number is, in some sense, immanently grounded in it. I accordingly suggested senses in which there may be conceived to be a ground for the trinity, back of revelation, in the divine nature itself.

First, there certainly is in the divine nature, as represented in express revelation, a property, peculiarity, or somewhat, called the "Word," (pp. 145–6.) The creation itself was manifestly possible, only on the ground of an originative power of Form, from which the created objects and frames of order deriving their mold, may issue

as a true Cosmos; representing, as in a mirror, the thoughts of their Author. And this Word, this Formative Power, is the "Wisdom" that is said to have "been with him in the beginning of his way before his works of old," "brought forth" or begotten from within "when there was no depth." This Word or Wisdom is next declared to have come forth from "the bosom of the Father" and declared Him to men; living, in a personal way, among men, as the incarnate Son of the Father. Thus much we know concerning what is back of the Christian or instrumental trinity, and exists immanently in the divine nature itself. We only do not know exactly how much of the personal form of the Son or Sonship, as distinguished from the Word, is tropical and referrible to the incarnation or the revelation in time, and how much to the essential nature of the Word, as viewed in relation to the interior substance of the Godhead. And this we can not know, for the simple reason that the divine essence or the psychology, so to speak, of the divine nature, is not within our plane of understanding.

Secondly, it is plain that, if we look at the trinity simply as an "instrumental trinity," unable to determine with certainty any thing more positive concerning it, than that the One can be most fitly revealed to finite beings in this way; then, as it is in the very nature of God to reveal himself, as truly as to create, or to be, so there is, in this view, a ground of trinity certainly in the nature of God as truly immanent as his being; and he must be known as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by all created minds forever (p. 113 and p. 177.) It is only not

within our power, so far to penetrate the interior mystery of God, as to be sure whether his being most fitly revealed to finite beings in this way is required by truth to himself, or by a necessary accommodation of himself to them and to the symbolic and finite media by which their apprehension is conditioned.

Thirdly, it costs me nothing in the way of opinion to admit, as many are fond of doing, a "threefold distinction" in the divine nature, back of the exterior instrumental trinity, as its original ground. I say 'nothing in the way of opinion;' partly because the admission really means nothing; and partly because it would, for that reason, cost me some sacrifice of self-respect to shelter myself under it. You will always observe that, when this language is resorted to, it is done only as a way of getting back in words what has been given up or lost in the pressure of argument. It comes into view always after the argument is over, and not as being any integral part of it. Floored, as every honest man must be, in a logical attempt upon the persons, the debater recovers himself upon the "threefold distinction;" conscious, meanwhile, when asking of himself what or how much he means by it, of resorting to his ear, in fault of any meaning discoverable to his understanding. But this recovery of soundness by words, after it has been lost in argument, is too much like saving one's orthodoxy by a codicil to his last will and testament.

But you may desire of me to answer another and different question, viz., whether, letting go all consideration of what may be involved in the process of revelation or redemption, there are not three persons in the divine

nature answering to, or equivalent to, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of scripture?

To this I answer, first, that possibly no one has a right to require or to make any answer concerning the trinity of God, as viewing it wholly apart from what is incidental to the matter of revelation. For, if it should happen to be true that the trinity is, in some more or less partial sense, an incident of revelation, the answer would be so far based in a false assumption. Secondly, that I can not be sufficiently sure of what is meant by the term '*equivalent*,' to be sure that I answer the question in the real meaning of the question. Dr. Emmons is able to say with confidence that the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost "originate from the work of redemption," and before that "were unknown in heaven;" also, that there was not "the same foundation" for the difference to human view of the persons, as for the persons themselves, between which there was "no original difference." (Vol. IV., p. 109.) I am not able to carry my penetration so far, and I do not know whether it is intended, in the word '*equivalent*,' to require an answer in regard to matters so far transcending my plane of intelligence. Thirdly, it is clear enough, that the terms "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," or the persons thus denominated, are conceptions essentially finite, being cast in molds derived from our own personal consciousness. As such they are localized above or below; descending and ascending; moving in space; sending and sent; suffering, deliberating, remembering, acting as logical subjects upon and toward each other; relative, all, in form to each other and, as relative, finite. Then, without difficulty, I

answer that there certainly are not, in the divine nature, three finite persons, answering as finite equivalents to the manifestly finite terms or conceptions, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Is it, then, the question, whether, *removing* the form-element of the terms, which is finite, and speaking of what is signified under and back of them apart from form, there are not three infinities, equivalent or answering to the characters of the terms? To this I answer, first, that there certainly are not three infinite beings back of these terms, or any where else. And then, secondly, that the question of equivalency is simply a question of analogy or analogic correspondence. It is the same as to ask whether, separating from *rectitude* the form of a straight line, there is not something in it still equivalent to a straight line? Doubtless there is something in it, or in our mode of thinking it, that answers analogically to a straight line, but nothing that is equivalent in any other sense. There is some relation, it can not be denied, between moral rectitude as a notion entertained by us and a straight line, by reason of which one is fitly represented by the other. But we can not investigate or define that relation. So there is doubtless a like relation between the divine nature, as thought or to be thought by us, and the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; only the relation is more absolutely inscrutable, because the nature of God is itself inscrutable. Accordingly, when we undertake to separate the form-element in the scripture trinity, it is sufficiently plain that we can not know how far we separate, or sink, or qualify, the personalities represented by the terms; which are

themselves forms of conception derived from our outward state of life and experience.

I wish I could give a more categorical answer to a question which many are accustomed to think of so great consequence; but really it does not seem to be my fault, unless it be my fault that I am under human limitations. I see no reason why I should strain my imagination to compass that which I know can not be compassed, and which it has baffled all the attempts of Christian men in all ages to conceive and describe. I can only say that God unrevealed must be as different from God revealed as truth from symbol, a nature transcending our plane of intelligence from a threefold presence in it. Baxter endeavored to image a threeness in the divine nature by Light, Heat, and Motion, co-existing in the Sun; an image that sinks personality altogether. Others have occupied their fancy with other images, all, perhaps, equally vain. Having none to offer myself, I have nothing left me but to be exercised in simple pity, as a spectator of the hard fate of so many Christian men who have lost their simplicity; who can not but speculate or dream, where they are called to worship; and since God is offered them in words and finite forms, can not receive him as offered and rest their souls in him, till they find exactly how the terms in which he is offered are related to what is infinite and inmost in his substance!

III. MANNER OF THE PLURALITY. To discover a sufficient reason or economical necessity for the plurality or threeness, by which God is represented in the Christian

Scriptures, it seems to me is not difficult; however difficult it may be to discover that there is no other and deeper reason back of it. Not even the spirit, character, and powers of a man can be expressed in any other way than by contrasts, or in terms of light and shade. We require to see him as compared with other men, then as compared with himself in diverse conditions and exigencies, that by one revelation what is tender and gentle, by another what is great and heroic, may appear. In the same way, all his distinctive qualities will be manifested; the soft, the strong, the good, the severe, the just, the true; caution, courage, delicacy and breadth; his ability to grace humble scenes, to meet great storms of adversity, to sustain the burdens of empire and bear the helm of counsel in years of revolution. Passing through these manifold terms of exercise, which are so many modes of self-revelation, he will seem, at different times, to be quite another being, so varied and repugnant are his demonstrations. And yet he is the same, only more completely revealed.

Can the Infinite God be revealed in a simpler manner and with fewer antagonisms? Being infinite, and all terms of expression finite, what shall we expect but an array of contrasts more numerous, sometimes violent even beyond the power of definite comprehension?

And yet God, as the Absolute Being, has no external occasions, exigencies, or objects of contrast; for in him, as the Absolute, all worlds and events, and even the minds that are to know him, are, in some proper sense, included. He can be expressed therefore only by contrasts of light prepared within himself, or the circle of

being that he fills. He will give us to behold him, first, as being *in* his works, the substance of substances, and power of powers, and cause of causes, all things created being taken as the vesture only of his person; and then He will set himself, in a figure, outside of his works and over against them, doing his will upon them, to them, and for them, just as if they had substance, power, cause, out of himself; evincing his presence by restraint of them, or bending them to his will—loosing the bands of Orion and setting bars and doors for the sea. The representations of scripture, and the ways of nature and Providence correspond, both revealing God by symbols that are various and formally repugnant. We think little of these contrarieties, because they are so very familiar to us. Who ever stops to observe the contrasts and formal contradictions, for example, of the following passage of scripture—who ever fails to receive its power?—"The God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Here are three forms quite incompatible as such, *above, through, in*,—how absurd! If God is above us in position, how is he through us in motion? if through us in motion, how in us by residence? if in us by residence, how above us in position? And yet, in this triad of prepositions, all repugnant as forms, God is set forth in the most vivid and powerful manner to our thought. If we say that the terms are finite in their sense, and ascribe to God what can be true only of a finite being, (for to be above any thing, or in motion through any thing, or habited in any thing, belongs, in strict propriety, only to a finite being,) it is true. If we say that all such assertions are, in some

view, fictitious, that is true. And yet, if we look upon what is communicated or impressed concerning God, they are most intensely true and sublime. This little sentence we may take indeed as the figure of all things done by God, to bring himself into knowledge. He is ever passing through the finite relative world in this manner—a God above the world, moving through the world, in the world; changing attitudes, acting upon his own action, restraining powers that are his own power, calming whirlwinds that are his own wrath; and so, in ways that are manifold and formally repugnant, revealing himself to men.

That something like a trinity was needed, under the same general conditions, it is by no means difficult to believe. Whether it be immanent and essential, in some undiscovered indefinable sense of the terms, or not, it does at least appear to be necessary as an external and instrumental fact. It is remarkable, too, that orthodox champions of the trinity, as distinguished as Athanasius in ancient times, and Twisten in our own, regard the very text just cited, as containing, in its three prepositions, an allusion or reference to what is deepest in the matter of the trinity itself. Thus, Twisten says, “The *above* is ascribed to the Father, the *through* to the Son, and the *in* to the Holy Spirit.” And Athanasius, as quoted by him, says, “The Father does all things through the Son, in the Holy Ghost, and thus the unity of the Holy Triad is preserved, and thus, in the church, is preached one God, who is over all, and through all, and in all.”—(*Bib. Sac.*, No. II., pp. 45–6.) Nor is this any so fanciful use of the text, if it be under-

stood that the three persons, externally set forth, are needed under the same general law that requires the three prepositions, viz., to fill out or complete our sense of God. They represent the "one substance," or Absolute God to us, by means of a social relationship within himself. But is he therefore not one substance? Or is he rather one more perfectly revealed?—revealed as one, by means of antagonism and number; revealed as person, by three persons; revealed as out of our finite categories, by a threefold revelation in them? What then is our law of interpretation, but to receive the persons as instrumental persons, having their practical and, at present, only investigable import in the knowledge they give us of the one substance? No one pretends, either that they give us any knowledge of what is not in that one substance, or of what is contrary to its oneness.

We shall not deny the immanence, in some possible uninvestigable sense, of the persons. We can not even deny the immanence of the *above*, *through*, and *in*; for, possibly, they are even original spatial categories of the Eternal Mind itself,—else how, it might be asked, came they ever to be found in the terms of space or spatial relationship? And yet we do not think it any great wisdom to reason in this way. We only allow ourselves to be assisted by scripture, in these terms of spatial antagonism, to conceive more adequately the One God and his relations of character and government toward us. And then, having received our benefit in them, we are satisfied. Just so we are to follow out all the varied actings and interactings of the persons, and embracing them as media of thought and of spiritual worship, in all their

manifold cross relations, to ascend, as we are raised thereby, into the fullness and blessedness of the One divine nature. All else in the persons we may leave to the future, as we do all the other mysteries of form and event which encompass our life. If then it shall be found that the persons, and even all number and form and relation are, in some most real and true sense, (which is far from being incredible,) immanent in God's nature, it will be as soon as the discovery can be made valuable.

If any test of this mode of interpretation is needed, let it be applied, and it will be found to be the only one by which all the antinomies of scripture relating to the three persons can receive their natural use, or be so interpreted as not to be explained away. They may be arranged in eight classes.

1. The class of *inequality*; the Father sending the Son and the Spirit; conceived relatively as holding the position of supernal eminence and authority; declared, in that view, by the Son, to be greater than he,—representations, under countenance of which, the old theologians were accustomed to call the Father *fons trinitatis*.

2. The class of *equality*, demanding for the Son his right to be honored as the Father; quickening whom he will, from life in himself, even as the Father; one with the Father; equal without robbery.

3. The class of *concurrent action*; the Son doing whatsoever he sees the Father do; the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, flowing in a common stream of good.

4. The class which makes the persons *subject and object*, acting terminatively upon or toward each other; the Son

conceived by the Holy Ghost ; the Father owning the Son at his baptism ; the Spirit descending visibly upon him ; the Spirit given to him without measure ; Jesus breathing and sending the Holy Ghost ; the Father hearing the Son ; the Son glorifying the Father, ascending to the Father.

5. The class representing *each* to be God ; worshiped and accepted in the prerogatives of God.

6. The class representing *all* to be God, as in the baptismal formula.

7. The class which represents the persons, *each to be other and different from each* ; the Father loving the Son as other than Himself, giving the Spirit unto him without measure ; the Son declaring that he does not his own will, teaches not his own doctrine ; or, in a single utterance, representing each and all the persons to be other in their mutual relationship ; “ *I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter.*”

8. The class wherein *each* is represented, by cross affirmations, *to be each of the others.*

As it is here that I am likely, if any where, to prove heretical, I will offer some of the texts that compose this eighth class, in a more deliberate manner.

Thus Christ declares that he is the Father. “ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, how then sayest thou show us the Father ?” This language is not to be understood, of course, as affirming that God, as invisible, is seen by their eyes ; but only as declaring that the Father is virtually manifest in him, so that, if he be taken as the Father, in a way of personal identification, it will produce no essential error.

Christ also declares that the real agent in his own works is to be conceived as being the Father. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

The Father and the Son are set forth together also, as being the Spirit or Comforter. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him." This is said in a connection where the gift of the Comforter is the subject of discourse, and is, in fact, a version of the promise of the Comforter.

Christ also, in the same connection and only a few verses before, had been promising himself as being, under another version, the equivalent of the Comforter. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;" "but ye see me;" "at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you;" "I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

The Father is exhibited in the office of the Spirit. "Sanctify them through thy truth." "Except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

Christ is acknowledged, again and again, as being the Spirit—as when "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is spoken of, in the eighth of the Romans; also in the frequent interchange of the terms "*Christ*" and "*Spirit*," which appears in the verses following, an interchange wholly inadmissible, save on the ground that the terms are, in some proper sense, convertible; also in the words, "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," "the Spirit of his Son;" and most emphatically of all, in the words of Peter, when he represents the ancient prophets as inspired by Christ—"searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify."

Christ is also represented as doing the renewing and sanctifying works of the Spirit. "We are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus"—"born of him"—"Christ liveth in me."

You perceive, in short, that the Three are as often declared, in scripture, each to be each, as each to be greater or less, or each to be God, or all to be God, or all to be equal, or all concurrent, or all to be mutually subject and object toward each other, or each to be other and different. And thus it results from a simple classification of scripture language, accepted in its own forms of conception, previous to all constructive reasonings upon those forms, whereby they may be reconciled with each other, or set in harmony with theologic standards, that we have, at least, eight classes of representation that are formally contradictory and repugnant one with another; so little do the scriptures acknowledge any restraints of system, so little care have they, in the noble sublimity of their freedom, to keep within the bounds of a nice logical consistency. That there is any real contradiction or inconsistency between the classes exhibited, I do not intimate or believe; though it is obvious enough that the mere speculatist, practicing on these classes of terms in a logical way, can find nothing but absurdity in them. On the contrary, it seems very plain to me, given the fact of a true incarnation, that just such a circle of antinomy as this will result of necessity; for the incarnate person, who is God localized in space and a body only *so far as* may serve a special purpose and work, and not absolutely—therefore God in a sense and not God in a sense—will be continually adjusting his position by contrarieties of

word and act that correspond with the violent conditions he is under. Unable to conceive the interior mystery of the incarnation itself, we of course can not open the secret interior force and adjust the secret relation of the persons and the contrarious representations under which they appear; but it is something to know that they are offered more to our imagination than to our dialectic faculty; something also to know that the finite-infinite, subject-supreme, earthly-divine, God-man, implied in the simple idea of incarnation itself, must in word and act appear to be inferior, equal, concurrent, subject, God, not God, identical with and other than God the Supreme, or God as inward power and Spirit.

Take now this eightfold complication of cross meanings, running into and against and over and under each other, flowing round and round in eddies of free mobility, and let the question be, how shall we receive them, by what law settle their import? The Unitarian fixes upon the class No. I., as the central truth, and requires all the other classes to fall in under that and receive a construction that allows the ontological or essential superiority of the Father. The New England Trinitarian fixes, in the same way, upon the classes Nos. II. and VII., and requires the other six to accept a construction that will logically accord with the conception of three equal and distinct agents or substances.

But, not to speak of other difficulties encountered by one or the other of these modes, they break down both, and utterly fail upon the class No. VIII. The Unitarian can do nothing with it, and the New England orthodox teacher can do as little. If there be only one divine per-

son, viz. the Father; or three divine substances, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then to allow any such circular identification of persons as we here discover, is scarcely possible. What can the Unitarian do with Christ, a human person, associated with the Father under the pronoun "*We*," or identified so often and in ways so many with the Spirit, who is confessedly God himself? How can the common Trinitarian admit that Christ is the Father manifested; the Father, the Spirit; the Spirit, Christ; and Christ, the Spirit; with any better reason than that John, James, and Peter, may each be each of the others in the same way?

Accordingly, this whole class of representations which identify the persons, each with each, round the circle, (more numerous and explicit than almost any other of the eight,) is thrust out of the general economy of trinity as an intruder, and allowed no common footing with the other seven classes of antinomies and cross-views which enter as elements or instrumental forces into the plan. No identification of each with each is suffered, save in a way so remote and so merely putative or logically inferential, that the power of the representation is lost. When Christ says, "I will come to you," it means "I will send a third person, who, your theologians will be able to show you, is constructively myself, because he acts for me"! So it is that theologic dogmatism, too narrow to accept the full matter of the trinity offered in the scripture, rejects what exceeds its petty logical measures; sacrificing, at once, the grand, self-balancing, living force of the plan; but none the less content with its meager wisdom, since it has reduced the repugnances it found to

such a fine show of harmony! Much as the ancient Briton said of the Roman conquerors,—“They make a solitude and call it peace.”

Meantime, exactly contrary to all such theologic wisdom, the moment we consent to let this eightfold contradictory matter remain and receive it practically in its true instrumental force,—a dialogue in the plane of our human understanding, through which the Infinite, incomprehensible One images to our thought his love and quickening grace, and so bestows upon our faith what passeth our understanding,—then the reconciliation is already accomplished, and the hostile terms coalesce in a manner so easy and natural, that we are scarcely conscious of their repugnance. I know no other method of interpretation of which this can be said. We have trinity, we have unity, we have no distraction, the revelation is full and easy, the mystery left welcome and refreshing.

But it will be said, I suppose, that the point assumed in class No. VIII. is a plain undeniable heresy; all orthodox Christians, since the days of Sabellius, having held it as a necessary article and test of orthodoxy that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit; whereas I am representing here that they are each as truly each, as they are each other and different from each. Yes, and nothing is more plain than that orthodoxy ought, on its own showing, to have asserted both in the same way. Thus, when Calvin says that he could well enough give up every thing else, resting in the simple confession by all of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; only requiring [as against the Sabellians] the

addition that the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished by a peculiar property," (Lib. I., Chap. 13, Sec. 5;) if we bring into view another fundamental principle of his, that "the whole essence or nature of God is in each of the persons," (Sec. 19;) it is seen, at once, that his 'peculiar property' is a property, not of essence or being, but simply of mode; or, as he would say, of act, that is, of God's eternal necessary act of generation; and then how manifest is it that, if the persons be other in respect of the peculiar property, they are much more emphatically one and the same, each with each, in virtue of their sameness of essence or being. I do not say that in asserting this I am orthodox; I am not, neither is the scripture; no, nor orthodoxy itself in denying it; for if it be true, as the church doctrine has in all ages affirmed, that the whole essence of God is in each of the persons, what can be more evident than that each of the persons is and should be constantly declared to be the same with each,—both the same and other, just as the scriptures speak; the same, because of the 'oneness of essence;' other, because of the 'peculiar property.' Indeed, this horror of Sabellianism, that has kept the church, for so many ages, asserting and re-asserting it as a test of orthodoxy that the Father is not the Son nor the Son the Spirit, appears in this view to have been a kind of theological distemper of which it is difficult to speak with respect. And it is precisely here that the doctrine of trinity has lost a feature necessary to its proper balance and soundness of proportion. As there was needed an assertion of otherness to exclude the shallow modalism of Sabellius; so

there was needed an assertion of sameness to qualify and make safe the otherness. But this being omitted, or even punished as a fatal heresy, the persons being accepted as other always and not the same each with each, the tendency has been to look upon them as being absolutely and completely other, and then the balance of the truth is gone,—they are each another God, or one of several Gods.

Besides, the practical result is even worse, for the class No. VIII. is even more necessary, if possible, to the moral effect of the trinity than either of the others; for having gotten one term of the trinity, viz., the Son on earth and within the range of our human brotherhood, if then we can identify him fully with the Father above in supernal dominion, and with the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier, in our own secret bosom, by this revolving wheel of thought or circular representation, we pass the spirit of the garden and the cross into the sky, and the power of the sky down into the tomb of Jesus so that he can not be holden of death, and both again through our own defiled nature, as a presence of all-sufficient power and crucified Love; and so, finding the Christ of God above, and the God of Christ below, and the Spirit of the Father and the Son every where, then the one link of the trinity that we found in the flesh, becomes the link of a revolving chain which is drawing us up also into the sacred circle of the divine nature. Precisely this is wanted to give full effect to the trinity. If it be held as three persons, in rigid attitude, then, instead of completing each of the persons in a character of real divinity, by mutual interchange of position, they become

only partial finite characters, and we are as much engaged in choosing between them as in love. What power is there to our feeling in the Spirit, the Sanctifier, for example, when conceived to be the same as the Christ of Gethsemane or the cross, now present within! How different is he to our thought from a mere inhabitation of divine efficiency or power! But exactly this our common orthodoxy will not suffer. This is heresy—the bible beyond a question, but yet heresy. But it is such a kind of heresy that the man who has it in him, receiving thereby of the fullness of God, grace for grace; beholding the throne in the cross and the cross also in the throne, and finding in his own bosom all the glories of divine majesty and the patient love of Calvary, blending in holy confluence and breathing gales of love to lift him to the skies—this is a kind of heresy for which he will be quite willing to suffer. No fire will burn it out of him. Consider now,

IV. THE TRUTH OF WHAT IS EXPRESSED. Admitting that three persons are instrumentally needed to express God, wherein lies the truth of the expression, it may be asked, if there be not allowed or asserted three persons in the nature of God, answering to the three of revelation? That depends, I reply, upon the object of the revelation made. If it be to communicate a true ontological solution of God's nature, that is, of his parts and his organic structure, the threeness exhibited must, in that case, have a correspondent threeness answering somehow to it in God's inmost nature; else it is no true exhibition. If, on the other hand, the object of the

revelation is to bring the one God into knowledge and give us the most distinct and adequate impression possible of his government, character and feeling, that we may be quickened and made partakers of the divine nature ourselves, then it may be otherwise; then it may be that the threeness observed should be taken instrumentally, as having its proper truth only when it is taken in that manner. In other words, it may be true that a representative multiplicity is the necessary means of expressing unity of substance; just as form, of expressing the formless. And, in that case, no one can say that number imports falsity; for it is not the matter in hand to set forth number, but, by means of number, personality, infinity, and all that belongs to a character of infinite excellence. Thus, in the equation $F. S. H. = G.$, there is no falsity simply because the threeness, on one side, is declared to equal that which has no threeness, on the other; for the threeness avails only to express quantity, and the equation is designed to hold only as regards quantity, and not as affirming the equal number of factors.

Besides, the objection I am removing lies with equal force against the truth of the Old Testament, taken as a revelation of God's unity. For it not only reveals oneness, leaving the matter of threeness to be revealed afterward, as some might imagine, but it so reveals the oneness as to exclude any suspicion or thought of threeness; and so that every pious Jew, between Abraham and Christ, would have insisted on a unity of person in the God of their worship, opposed to every conception of threeness; and would have referred, without hesitation,

to Moses and the prophets for his proofs. Was it then a false revelation to which they trusted, because the nature of God did not answer to the oneness revealed?

Or we may reply in a manner that carries some appearance (though not so designed) of disproving the threeness supposed, as pertaining, in any sense, to the interior nature of God. If a man were to hold a protracted correspondence, by letter, with a stranger, that correspondence would reveal feeling, judgment, reason, passion, imagination, and all the other natural properties of the man; because the contents of his person will both yield, and dominate in, the matter of the correspondence, and will thus appear in the revelation made by it. Now the world of nature is to God's person what the letter is to the man, and is it not remarkable that this world of nature, looked upon, studied, and lived in for four thousand years, had awakened no suspicion or thought of a threefold nature in its author, (excepting, perhaps, in the questionable instance of the Platonic Trinity,) and has not, even to this day? If there were any such constitutional metaphysical threeness in the divine nature, is it credible that an expression of God, so vast and manifold, would not have made even a conspicuous show of it? I state no such conclusion. I only set the argument against the objection. I state a simple fact, for which I am not responsible, and leave it to the objector to dispose of the fact. One thing only is clear, that if the revelation of the New Testament is false, because the three divine persons answer to no real threeness of person in God's interior nature, then the oneness of God's revelation in the Old Testament and in

nature is false, because it gives no intimation of his threeness.

V. THE ETERNITY OF THE PERSONS. The eternity of the Word as a distinction of the Divine nature is certain, because it is revealed, and is even necessary to the conception of God as a Creator. But exactly how far the distinct personality of the Word, when regarded as the Son, is referrible to the incarnation, or to the humanly personal life and history of Jesus in the flesh, it may be difficult for us, at present, to decide. So also of the Spirit, as regards the distinct personality of the conception; though there can be no doubt of the essential immanence and eternity, in God, of all which belongs to the idea of Spirit, viz., the eternal, necessary proceeding of act and power. It does not seem to be generally observed, as it should be, that personality ascribed to infinite being, whether to God simply, or to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is never a literal, but only an analogical conception. It is a finite term borrowed from our own consciousness, and is applicable only in part, or with many negatives annexed. Hence the difficulty of maintaining that the Son and Holy Ghost will be as precisely personal to our apprehension always or eternally as now in the Christian trinity, where they are represented under figures that find their type in the plane of a finite human personality. Even if there be some unimaginable threeness in the divine nature, which is immanent there, and is conceived and always to be conceived under the three personal figures, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; still our own exercise in the truth and

the wider opening of our minds to God will be clearing more and more the limitations of personality in these figures, and it may be that, in clearing these limitations, our corrected impressions will be widely varied from what they now are, as regards the matter of personality itself, when ascribed to them. Just as our Unitarian friends, who are so greatly shocked by the absurdities of a real incarnation, will discover that the term 'Father,' in which they so much delighted, and so abundantly used in their worship, was, after all, a conception as truly finite and a humanization every way as difficult to reason, as the other—a finite-infinite as absurd and contradictory, and involving, in the worship, precisely the same charge of idolatry that is laid against the worship of the Son, or the Word made flesh.

However, there is another view in which, apart from all questions of immanent or interior personality, we may nearly convince ourselves of the eternity of the persons, as now made known to us in the process of Christian revelation—only allowing for the corrections just referred to. If the persons be regarded simply as incidental to the process of revelation, (God in Christ, p. 113,) yet since God is an eternally self-revealing being in his very nature, we may well enough assume on that ground, if no other, that he is always to be known, even from eternity to eternity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that is, by a trinity of eternal generation, or a trinity eternally being generated, in virtue of his self-revealing activity. There can, at least, be no harm or essential error in holding such a view of him in our expectations of the future life; for since this is the practical

conception of God offered us by the Christian scripture, we only conceive, in assigning perpetuity to it, that God will eternally be God—which involves no presumption on our part, unless we thrust ourselves into mysteries beyond our compass and attempt to assert the eternity of the persons in a sense more scientific and curious than God has permitted us to verify. I feel no difficulty, therefore, in speaking of the persons Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as eternal. It can hardly be avoided, unless we consent to starve our expectations of the future, by forcing on them a conception of God wholly insufficient to the uses of our present life. Let our hope be comforted in that which feeds our faith. Let us rest in God with unquestioning trust, as being now and always Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, suffering no scruple or restraint, only leaving it to him to open the secret of his interior structure, when we have power to receive it and modesty to bear it.

I have touched, in this review, many of the principal points in the question of trinity, and given you the view that I hold of each as distinctly as I am able. That you will be wholly satisfied with my representations, trying them by the tests of our New England orthodoxy, I do not expect, or wish. My design was to make issue with this, and even to arraign it as a virtual heresy.

Pardon me if I speak plainly on this subject—duty compels. I take no pleasure in disturbing the feeling of my brethren; but the struggles of experience have opened to my view other disturbances, or even silent

woes of feeling, which, as they have my sympathy and have themselves furnished me to my duty, I must not betray or fear to redress. Yes, I frankly own to you that I accept no prevailing view of trinity now held in New England. If I understand the sense of this doctrine, now prevailing among us, (under and contrary to some of our professed formulas,) I must dissent from it. I did so in my discourse at New Haven—I continue to do it. I go before the Christian world and arraign its adherents there, one and all, to make answer for its truth.

I would not speak with disrespect of any opinion, or supposed doctrine, earnestly held and dear to the faith of my brethren; but the truth is that what we call orthodoxy on this subject, in New England, is wholly unhistorical—a provincialism, a kind of theological *patois*, quite peculiar to ourselves. Our religious fathers of the past century were abundantly active thinkers, but they were too little historic, in their theological studies, to keep their circle of thought duly expanded, or even to retain a full exercise and possession of the catholic doctrine of Christianity. They grappled manfully enough with a few speculative questions related to the will and responsibility; such as the fall and the existence of evil, choice, special grace, regeneration, and decrees. Here indeed they stuck fast, debating and still debating at problems ever close at hand, and the matter of which they need scarcely go out of themselves to find. And so it has resulted, as it only could, that many great subjects of revelation, which did not come within the range of their speculative method, have been so much neglected, that the proportion of the faith, not to say its purity, has

greatly suffered. Busied thus about their own metaphysical center, they fell into a raw logical habit, as much more confident, as it was more incompetent, to some of the highest subjects of revelation. They were *thinking out* a gospel, and could not so well receive one offered to their faith and their imaginative power—phosphorescing bravely enough, but unable to stand in the shining body of the sun and shine with it.

Hence it resulted, as one of the pernicious effects of their too confined exercise and their incompetent theologic method, that the doctrine we are now discussing fell out of its true historic balance, under their treatment, and became, as received by us, a partial or merely provincial conception. The original church doctrine of trinity contained, as one of its elements, the principle of the 'eternal generation' of the Son, and the 'eternal procession' of the Holy Spirit. In virtue of this element, the 'One Substance' [i. e., essence] was conceived to be eternally generating a trinity of persons, by its essential activity; and so the One Substance or essence was conceived to stand as one, without any infringement of unity; because the persons were predicable of it as act, not as essence.

But our New England logic, falling on the church dogma of eternal generation, could not stay to find, by an exercise of intellective insight, the possible truth hid under its mistaken form, but immediately drew the fatal inference that, if the Son was generated and the Spirit sent, they must be inferior derived existences. What then but nonsense, or scholastic jargon, are these terms 'generation' and 'procession?' Therefore we removed

them, threw them away, forgot them. Then going on to ply our logic on the matter of trinity, with a principal term or element wanting, viz., that which alone made the truth possible, we run ourselves at once into complications of heresy much to be deplored, because they are complications of real and very pernicious error. Ceasing to conceive a trinity of act, we began to assert a trinity of persons in the divine essence itself, which is plain tritheism. Or, if we struggle often to get away from this, it is ever in some method so confused and mixed with crudity, as to show that we are really in what we deny and know not how to escape it. And so it turns out that, while I seem to have annihilated the trinity, by asserting it in a form that contains, in fact, the principle of eternal generation more modestly conceived, it is really annihilated by our New England orthodoxy, because of the denial and removal from it of that alone which gave it balance and enabled it to stand—just as a stool may still keep its position if all the legs are shortened, but topples down at once if one of them is taken away. It results also, as it needs must, that having slidden completely off the basis of historic orthodoxy in this manner, and even lost the sense of it, many are afflicted for my safety and are actually charging me with a fundamental departure from the faith; and for no other reason than because of the startling novelty of a doctrine which, in fact, is only a renovated form of lost orthodoxy itself.

Having rejected the church doctrine of a trinity in act, or by eternal generation, and set ourselves to find some possible trinity in God as essence, consistent with the

unity of his essence, (which plainly is not possible,) the whole doctrine of the subject has fallen into the greatest confusion among us. Thus, the minority of your committee have even alleged, as one of their principal charges against me, what I think will some time be classed among the curiosities of ecclesiastical history, that I have asserted the *homousion*—"the strictest unity and simplicity of the divine nature." This they imagine excludes any possible belief in the trinity! Our brethren of Fairfield, too, in the minute they sent to our General Association at Salisbury, complained of it as a heresy, that some are beginning to deny "three distinct persons in the one divine *essence*"—where the particle '*in*,' it is true, may be explained to mean only '*pertaining to*,' (i. e., to the divine essence regarded as a necessarily active principle,) and so to be consistent with proper orthodoxy; but which, taken in the New England sense of the terms, as I have no doubt it was both meant and understood, is simple heresy. Or you may take it as a specimen of the unchurchly composts that have found a quiet shelter in what we call our orthodoxy, that an influential church, whose pastor sits among you investigating my supposed departure from the faith, asserts for its article of trinity—"three natures and one person"! Other words do indeed follow, in a kind of jingle that seems to have some reference to the Nicene doctrine, but are only the more absurd on that account. Or, if it be suggested that all these examples of crudity and confusion are so many casual aberrations and do not represent the true state of doctrine among us, I reply that our ablest preachers and theologic professors are

even accustomed to assert and maintain a trinity of persons in the divine *essence*. More commonly they use the word *nature*, by which they understand the same thing. Others set forth a trinity of persons, in the avowed sense of three distinct consciousnesses, wills, and understandings. Others even dare to assert, and without offense, a social trinity; a trinity of three distinct spirits, the One of which is the unity only of a *concilium*, or deliberative concord.

Such, in short, is the confusion into which we have fallen that, if any person will now dare openly to assert the proper and true unity of God, according to the ancient doctrine of the church, he will very certainly awaken suspicion and will probably encounter an accusation of fatal heresy. On the other hand, I am quite sure it would now be impossible to convict any teacher of heresy, for any imaginable threeness he may venture to assert; so completely have we lost the true balance of the doctrine. We are earnest for nothing but the Three; we have no apprehension of error save in denying the Three. We practically hold the Three without the "One Substance."

And the result is that every ingenuous young person who happens, in his searches after truth, to be stumbled by a view of the trinity so repugnant to faith and impossible to reason, has either to clear his way out into the truth by himself, through years of sorest conflict and groans of private mental war that God only does not frown upon; or else, in fault of any such persistency, to settle back into the more facile embrace of a confirmed and scornful infidelity.

I do then peremptorily refuse to justify myself, as regards this matter of trinity, before any New England standard. We have no standard, better than a residuary tritheistic compost, such as may be left us after we have cast away that which alone made the old historic doctrine of trinity possible. I know not whether you design to make a standard for me of this decadent and dilapidated orthodoxy of ours; but if you do, then I appeal to Cæsar; I even undertake to arraign your standard itself before the tribunal of history.

I do not undertake to say, or care to show, that the doctrine of trinity I have asserted coincides exactly with that which has been maintained in the church. I will only say that it classes with the church doctrine, while that of New England does not. The result of our comparison will be this. New England, as we have seen, asserts or tries to find a trinity of persons in the divine essence, or substance, or nature. This the church doctrine formally and peremptorily rejects as a fatal heresy; asserting, instead, a trinity grounded in the necessary activity of God, a trinity eternally being developed by God's necessary activity; just as we, in virtue of our vital, conscious nature, necessarily generate thought. This trinity, grounded in God as act, (*actus purissimus* was the phrase of the scholastics,) is sometimes set forth under the conception of 'eternal generation and procession.' Sometimes the persons are defined, as by Calvin, to be 'relations;' not such relations as may subsist between substances, but such as one active, conscious substance may have to itself; relations that may be illustrated by a reference to the relation we have to our-

selves, when we think of ourselves. Sometimes they are called persons 'in order;' that is, order of internal development; not the order of distinct substances, which are first, second, and third, as substances. Sometimes, also, persons 'in mode,' or 'in form;' not in the Sabellian sense of a merely casual mode or form of appearance, but in the generative sense of activity; for the activity of a substance is, in one view, a mode or form of the substance. In so many different ways and others that might be named, the proper church doctrine of trinity is represented; but they all agree, first, in not affirming trinity of the divine essence or substance as such; and, secondly, in referring the trinity of scripture to the essential activity of the divine nature. It is eternal, because it pertains to the eternal necessary going on of the life or conscious spirit of God; and, in that sense, it is immanent.

From this, which is the church doctrine, it will be seen that my supposed heresy differs, simply in descending from the a priori method and high transcendental key of the former. It finds, with that, a trinity which is predicable only of God as act; but instead of beginning transcendently at a point within the active life of God, it takes a humbler method, beginning at the consideration of our media and powers of knowledge, and of the conditions under which Infinite Being and Spirit may be revealed or expressed to us. Here it discovers, first, the probable need of trinity, as an instrumental verity; allowing us then to ascend, by the a posteriori method, to a conviction of *some* necessary ground for this in the divine nature back of it; and, again, more timidly and

with larger reservations of modesty, to the conviction that God, eternally self-revealing in his nature, is, in that sense, eternally and immanently three. It will also be found that the general view I have given classes with the church doctrine, in other subordinate particulars, where the New England doctrine does not.

To go over the whole course of history pertaining to the subject, in order to verify these representations, you will see to be impossible. I propose, therefore, to fix on three points or periods in the history most entitled to consideration, and confine my comparison to these.

I. THE NICENE COUNCIL. On a careful study of the creed prepared by this council, as interpreted by the writings of Athanasius in defense of it, I feel obliged to confess that I had not sufficiently conceived its import, or the title it has to respect as a Christian document. And it is a pleasant confirmation to me of the view I have given of the trinity, that, wholly disregarding, and, as I supposed, rejecting the Nicene doctrine; discussing the subject anew, under a different method, and without reference to any thing but the simple conditions of the subject itself; I yet seem only to have reproduced, in a different form, what is really the substantial import of that doctrine.

In the paradoxical matter of it, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God," (and what bolder paradox can be found,) a striking or even sublime illustration is given of what I ventured, so absurdly, or with such blamable audacity, to affirm concerning the absolute necessity of paradox and formal contradiction, in the ade-

quate expression or communication of God. What I advanced, in eight pages of my discourse, at New Haven, (pp. 137-45,) is here practically verified, I might almost say condensed, into a single turn of language. So also it will be found, on a close and properly historic inspection of this document, that the scheme of trinity it affirms was itself true to its authors, not so much as a rigid definition (which they certainly wished it to be,) but had its meaning or verity more as a combination of symbols offered to the imagination. Accordingly, since it has ceased with many of our times, to be taken and interpreted in that manner, they have also ceased to see in it any thing better than a chronicle of absurdity. In which it suffers the common fate of all formulas originally true; viz., that when they are taken as logical definitions, and not any longer as forms to be interpreted by insight, the lower sense, into which they subside, is at once too insipid for respect and too contradictory to be true.

The Nicene Creed, taking Athanasius for its interpreter, assumes for its point of departure, and a point that must not be moved, the unity and strict simplicity of God. It hinges on the word *homoousios*, commonly translated "one substance," or "same in substance." And so rigidly is this held, that the Word, or Son, whatever conception of his personality may be offered in the scripture, is yet declared to be "proper to the substance of the Father" and not another substance. Arius had affirmed that the Son was "made" or "created" by the Father; that he was "of the will" of the Father, existing without or exterior to the Father. Against him it affirms that he is "*of the substance*" of the Father, or, as

Athanasius declares again and again, (Library of the Fathers, pp. 232-264,) "proper to the substance of the Father"—not created, not of the will, not exterior.

Besides the phrase "one substance," he also employs other forms of expression to signify the strict unity of God. He declares that God is simple—"if God be simple as he is." (p. 38.)

He protests against all conceptions of partition, or division, as no more pertaining to God than to the simple substance of light itself,—“let us not imagine partitions and divisions of the Godhead, let us preserve undivided the oneness of nature and identity of light.” (pp. 40-41.)

He rejects any such conception of the unity of the persons, as consists in the consent or coincidence of so many wills, and denies that the Son or Word is called the image or likeness of the Father, because of any such coincidence; insisting that "the Powers, Authorities and Thrones above us," would as truly be "One with the Father, in that view, and as properly called God's Image or Word." (p. 415.)

He affirms the strict monarchy of God against all conceptions of a threefold, co-presiding agency in government. Thus he quotes, in favor of the Council, the authority of Dionysius of Rome. (pp. 45-6):—

"Next I reasonably turn to those who divide and cut into pieces and destroy that most sacred doctrine of the Church of God, the Divine Monarchy; making it contain three powers and partitive subsistences and godheads three. I am told that some among you who are catechists and teachers of the divine word take the lead in this tenet, who are diametrically opposed, so to speak, to Sa-

bellius' opinions; for he blasphemously says that the Son is the Father and the Father the Son; but they, in some sort, preach three Gods as dividing the Holy Unity into three subsistences foreign to each other and utterly separate. For it must needs be that, with the God of the Universe, the Divine Word is One; and the Holy Ghost must repose and habitate in God; and thus in One, as in a summit,—I mean the God of the Universe,—must the divine trinity be gathered up and brought together."

But if God be regarded in this manner as being rigidly one simple substance, and the Son as only "proper to" that substance, whence or by what process do the Council make out a trinity? They conceive, I answer, that the Word is to the invisible, incomprehensible nature of God, as Form to Substance; and as being the Form of God that he is the necessary Objective, in which God beholds, and through which he outwardly communicates Himself. As I offended by speaking of the Word as "the Form of God" and a "power of self-representation in God," so the terms "Image," "Face," "Form," "Truth," "Expression," "Likeness," "Radiance," "Light," "Wisdom," are constantly applied to him in the writings of Athanasius; these being familiar and accepted terms, by which he is understood as being that medium, or Medial Form in the divine nature, by which it acts, and through which, as its proper Word, it appears. Thus, to quote only a single passage, he says:—

"The Son is the Image and Radiance of the Father, and Expression, and Truth. For if, where Light exists, there be withal its Image, viz. Radiance; and a Subsist-

ence existing, there be of it the entire Expression; and a Father existing, there be his truth, viz. the Son," &c. (p. 209.)

Accordingly, the Son is to the Father as expression to substance, and so he "is proper to the substance of the Father," not another being. Or, as he states the argument himself, (p. 40)—"if the Son is Word, Wisdom, Image of the Father, Radiance, he must, in all reason, be one in substance." The standing comparison by which, on almost every page, he illustrates the relation of the Son to the Father, is that of the radiance to the light. Though he refers occasionally, for illustration, to the reason [logos] as related to the spirit or soul. In the following passage he employs both illustrations together:

"For we see that reason is ever, and is from him and proper to his substance whose reason it is, and does not admit a before and after. So we see, again, the radiance from the sun [elsewhere the light] is proper to it, and the sun's substance is not divided or impaired; but its substance is whole and its radiance perfect and whole, yet without impairing the substance of light, but as a true offspring from it. We understand, in like manner, that the Son is begotten, not from without, but from the Father; and while the Father remains whole, the expression of His subsistence is ever, and preserves the Father's likeness and unvarying Image; so that he who sees him, sees in him the Subsistence, too, of which he is the Expression. And, from the operation of the Expression, we understand the true Godhead of the Subsistence; as the Savior himself teaches, when he says: 'The Father who dwelleth in me, He doeth the works

which I do"—"I in the Father and the Father in me." (pp. 326-7.)

We come now to the clause, "begotten not made," affirmed by the Council, and afterward called the doctrine of "eternal generation." By this language, the Council, as explained by Athanasius, mean nothing more than what I have already reported, viz., that the Divine Word is necessarily and eternally *of* or *from* the Father, as the Radiance is of the Light. Not that the Son is "begotten," as in the past tense; but is ever and from eternity being begotten. He pertains to, or is "proper to" the going on, so to speak, of the divine nature, considered as self-conscious and vital substance (*actus purissimus*)—much as the radiance is "proper to" the light in its flow, and conterminous with it as regards the time of its flow. Had they known the optical mystery of the prism, they would, doubtless, have seized upon that as their best illustration; representing the trinity by the three primary colors of the prism, the red, blue, and yellow; pertaining, possibly, not to the substance, but to the inherent activity of the light and so indirectly to the substance.

Plainly their doctrine is not a doctrine of three substances, or of three persons in any sense which implies three substantial agents or entities, such as we understand by the word *person*, when applied in its ordinary use to human subjects. Calling the Son a person, or hypostasis, he is such only as being in the Form of God, or as Form related to Spirit, Word to Substance.

Their use of the word "*begotten*" I suppose to be a misapplication of the term as found in the scripture, where, probably, it relates only to the miraculous conception

and the birth in time of the Son ; still the fact, intended by it in the creed, is none the less worthy of belief because it is misderived, viz., that the Divine Word is necessarily of the Father and proper to His Substance ; that considered as in act, or self-conscious life,—creating, governing, revealing,—He as naturally generates the Word, or Son, as the active substance of the light generates the three colors in a prism ; or as we, in our perpetual act of consciousness, generate the formal thoughts by which we conceive and act out the expression of ourselves.

The important and principal matter to be noted in the Creed is this : *That the eternal generation is not a matter collateral to the conception of trinity, but fundamental to it.* Apart from this, which our New England teachers have flatly rejected, and which the minority of your committee expressly waived as a non-essential matter in the judgment to be formed of my heresies,—apart from this they knew no trinity. This, with the kindred doctrine of the “eternal procession,” afterward developed, *was* their trinity. The persons had their personality in these conceptions of eternal generation and eternal procession, and apart from these they were nothing ; these *were* the persons, and it was a fact as clearly perceived by them, as it ought to be by us, that three persons, or three co-existing agents, taken as a first truth, afterward to be conceived as one being, can by no possibility of thought be reduced to any thing better than a *concilium* of Gods,—a verbal and fictitious unity, affirmed as a cover to real and practical tritheism.

If, now, the question be raised, how far my supposed

heresy agrees with the Council, I answer that it differs in no respect that involves a real inconsistency ; save that I disown all their supposed knowledge of God, when they undertake, in their transcendental method, to go beyond scripture and assert, in their own right, what is true, or not true, concerning his internal modes of life and active being. Still they assert the simplicity and strict unity of God, deny a trinity in the divine essence, discover a trinity grounded in act as distinct from essence, and draw from the scripture the same conception of the Word or Logos.

As to their particular way of conceiving a trinity of act, that is by eternal generation, I do not affirm it, because I do not know it to be true ; but I begin with a trinity generated in time, ascending from it, with a certain measured confidence, to the conviction that the conditions and grounds out of which it is generated in time are eternal, and that so it is itself eternal. Considered as denying a trinity of essence and saving the strict unity of God, by conceiving a trinity predicable only of God as in act, the two schemes or doctrines coalesce in their matter ; they only handle the matter which is common, by different methods, and work out their results under different forms of language.

There may seem to be an important difference between the doctrine I have stated and that of the Council, in regard to the term *Father* ; which they receive as denoting the one original substance of the Divine Nature. I have supposed, on the contrary, since it first appears contemporaneously with the incarnation of the Word, and since one "relative" in the flesh demands another and supernal

"relative" to be held in thought with it, as a means of sustaining the mind from lapsing into idolatry, that the term *Father* and the formal conception of fatherhood, derived from the outward paternal relation, was then taken up and applied to the Absolute Substance conceived as person residing above. But this affects in no degree the scheme of trinity itself. It only touches the particular question whether the name and personal figure of fatherhood, as conceived on earth, is past, or prior *in use* to the incarnation; not the question whether the Word, as prior to the incarnation, is eternally of the divine substance now called Father, nor even the question whether that substance may be said to be "ingenerate," which, to the old theologians, was an important element of orthodoxy.

But the question will be raised, whether I do not radically and fatally disagree with the Council in not affirming the eternal Sonship? To this I answer, first, that the eternity of the Son, as a humanly personal conception of the Word, does not seem to be affirmed in scripture. Secondly, that, with the Council, I did affirm, on the simple authority of scripture, the eternity of the Word as proper to the One Substance. And, thirdly, that the Council, as defended by Athanasius, do not appear to have clearly asserted any thing more. I do not find that he raises the question of the eternity of the Son, as related to the eternity of the Word; though he does frequently speak of the eternal Sonship, as related to the opinions of Arius, and argues for it upon the language of scripture. Whether he means to affirm that Sonship as actual, or only potential in the Word, is

perhaps an open question. He, at least, quotes with approbation the opinion of Constantine to this effect :— “Nay, our most religious Emperor did, at the time, prove in a speech that he [the Son] was in being, even according to his divine generation, which is before all ages ; since even before he was generated in energy, he was *in virtue* with the Father ingenerately ; the Father being always Father, as King always and Savior always, having all things *in virtue*, and being always and in all respects in the same way.” (p. 65.) Even Bishop Bull, too, affirms that, while this language is, in one view, heretical, it becomes orthodox, if only it be understood to affirm that “our Lord was called the Word from eternity, and the Son upon his descent to create the worlds ;” i. e., in time. Moreover, I have spoken of the probability that God is from eternity a creator and revealer of Himself, and so is likely to have been and to be eternally known as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (pp. 113 and 177;) and if I seem, in this softened manner of expression, to be less confident and positive in regard to the eternal Sonship, I can hardly think it a fault to suffer some degree of modesty, in regard to what is inherently possible, true, or necessary, concerning the interior life of the divine nature.

By this careful examination of the Nicene Council, which is the fountain of church doctrine as regards this particular subject of trinity, you have discovered, I think, that our New England doctrine has little to say of orthodoxy ; having itself denied and cast away precisely that on which the church doctrine hangs, viz., the eternal generation and procession, and affirmed precisely that

which the church doctrine denies, viz., a threefold substance, or three substances in the divine nature. And as to myself, while I have as little care as possible to secure a shelter under any form of orthodoxy, it is, I confess, a most refreshing surprise to me to find that I can so heartily approve the general truth of what I supposed I had rejected; and that I can welcome, with a respect so genuine, the fathers of a remote age, who had lost their hold of our reverence, simply because we had lost our hold of their meaning.

Descending the line of history, to find another point for comparison, I invite your attention—

II. TO THE OPINIONS OF THE REFORMATION; more especially to those advanced by Calvin and his disciples of the following century.

What, then, is the trinity of Calvin? He says:—

“This distinction [of the three] is so far from opposing the most *absolute simplicity and unity* of the divine being, that it affords a proof that the Son is one God with the Father, because he has the same Spirit with him; and that the Spirit is not a different substance from the Father and the Son, because he is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. *For the whole nature is in each hypostasis*, and each has something peculiar to himself. * * * These distinctive appellations, says Augustine, denote their reciprocal *relations* to each other and not the substance itself, which is but one.”—(*Inst.*, Book I., Chap. XIII., Sec. 19.)

Again, he says:—“But they deceive themselves, in dreaming of three separate individuals, each of them

possessing a part of the divine essence. We teach, according to the scriptures, that there is essentially one God. * * * To comprehend the *essence* [homou-
sion] in the distinction [of persons] were not an absurd error, but a most gross impiety."—(Sec. 25.)

Here, as in the Nicene doctrine, we have the "strict simplicity," the "one substance," the bold, unqualified affirmation that the "whole nature is in each of the persons," and a denial as peremptory that the persons are distinct essences or "comprehend the essence." And then, if we inquire what constitutes the persons, or how they are conceived, we have the intimation that they "denote reciprocal *relations*"—answering to what I said of three "relatives" revealing the "Absolute One"—also, the intimation that "the whole nature" becomes, in turn, each of the persons by means of "some peculiar property"—which can, of course, be only something *in act*; for if the substance or nature be whole and the same in each, there can be nothing beside but act to make a peculiar property. And this answers to a trinity by generation. Accordingly he is emphatic on the terms "relation" and "peculiar property," as being fundamental to his conception of the persons:—"Now I say that each of the persons has a relation to the others, but is distinguished from them by a peculiar property. We use particularly the word *relation* or *comparison* here."—(Sec. 6.)

Then he goes on, turning himself in changes of expression, to bring out more fully the sense intended by the word *relation*, representing the Divine Three as resulting by *self-dispensation*, or by *economy*. "Neither

do I disapprove the definition of Tertullian, when rightly understood, 'that there is a certain distribution or economy which makes no change in the unity of the essence.' " Afterward, he speaks of the three as being three by "power" or by "mode," adhering still to the conception of a threeness that lies in act; for the active distinctions of a substance are in one view only the modes of a substance. And here he quotes Tertullian again :—

"He [Tertullian] unequivocally teaches that, whereas there is one God, yet, by dispensation or economy there is his Word; that there is but one God in the unity of the substance, but that the unity, by a mysterious *dispensation*, is disposed into a trinity; that there are three; not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in order."—(*Sec. 28.*)

There may be some difficulty in apprehending the precise meaning of this language, but thus much at least is clear, that Calvin finds no trinity in the substance any more than I do; that he finds a trinity in act or economy as I do; and would certainly find, in the present doctrine of New England, what, to name it for himself, is not only an "absurd error, but a most gross impiety."

The followers of Calvin among the English Reformers substantially coincide with him. John Howe, in some respects the ablest of them all, says :—

"And whereas the greatest quarrel is about personality, there can be nothing more plain than that one and the same man may sustain three persons; the person of a father, the person of a son, the person of a magistrate,

and the like. Many persons may be sustained by one and the same man; the notion of person, in the strict and common sense, being only taken from the circumstances of their state and condition who are spoken of, and not as denoting this or that essence. And so to be a man and this or that person is not all one. The same man may endure and may *sustentare*, may put on and may bear several persons; and so it is no repugnancy to reason at all that the same God may do so too. And therefore this pretence of the irrationality or contradictoryness of this doctrine doth itself want a pretence."— (*Howe's Complete Works, Lecture XV., pp. 1096-7.*)

He seems, in this language, to assert a merely modal trinity. He does, in fact, assert nothing more, unless it be added, as doubtless he was ready to add, that the 'persons' argued for are eternal. And even then his illustration will not make the persons, persons in the sense of being different logical subjects, but only different offices filled by the same subject—in which, it will be said, I suppose, that he only failed in his illustration. Be this as it may, you will at least discover in it how very remote he is from any thought of maintaining a trinity in the divine essence. His trinity, and that of all his contemporaries holding the eternal generation, is a trinity of act. This is their familiar way of speaking. Owen, in his treatise on the Person of Christ, employs only the current language, when he says— (Preface, p. xxxiv.)—"This eternal generation being a necessary internal *act* of the divine nature in the person of the Father."

Accordingly with this general idea, the Westminster

Assembly expressly define the personality of the persons, in that they are other than the One, as consisting in the active distinctions of generation and procession, and in nothing else. They do not refer to their own personal consciousness and say that the divine Three are distinct logical subjects, in the sense that they are themselves—this they well understand is a way to involve the whole subject in confusion. They have no conception at all of the persons, save through precisely that which we have cast away; that which the minority of your committee waive as unimportant, when charging me with a denial of the persons; that, again, which it is a principal part of my crime to have restored, only in a little different form, to the benefit of our dismembered orthodoxy.

Ques. “What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?”

Ans. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.”—(*Larger Catechism*, *Ques.* 10.)

To cite a single example from the Fathers of New England, that the contrast between our present tri-theistic notions and such as belonged to the times of proper orthodoxy may distinctly appear, I produce the following from the “Profession of Faith,” offered by John Davenport, at the time of his settlement in Boston:—

“In this Godhead are three distinct persons, co-eternal, co-equal and co-essential, being *every one of them one and the same God*; not three Gods, and therefore not

divided in essence, nature, or being; but distinguished, one from another, by their several and relative peculiar property; the Father is none but of himself, the Son is begotten of the Father before all worlds, the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son from all eternity."—(*Profession*, p. 2.)

His trinity stands, you perceive, in immediate connection with eternal generation and procession; because, apart from these, he had no conception of trinity. These are the distinctions of the persons, (otherwise *one and the same*,) apart from which any affirmation of trinity is absurd and false.

Now, if it should seem that *person*, as resolved into mere generation and procession, is, for aught that appears, person without personality, I certainly agree. It is not my fault if their definition is insufficient. But if they be understood to say simply that what we meet in scripture, as a grammatically personal three, is referrible to eternal generation and procession as its cause, that is not impossible; they only seem to travel a great way and pass a very transcendental height in their argument, to find a cause which could be found by a much simpler method. However, it was something to find, as they supposed, a necessary threefoldness in the essential activity of God, though it could yield them no real conception of the personality of the resulting or issuing three. And that it did not they themselves understood. A deep mystery still lay on the persons, and how to conceive them as logical subjects they could not find. And since they could not, they defined the persons simply by their cause, and there rested;

giving a proof of their wisdom in not defining, as remarkable as we do of our want of it in daring to define, the persons by a reference to our own personal consciousness. They were not crude enough to say, with Dr. Emmons, that we understand the persons as well as we understand our own personality; for they saw that, taking such a conception of the persons, the divine unity is gone beyond recovery.

Perceiving, in this manner, how impossible it was to penetrate the interior mystery of the persons, and of the trinity as constituted by them, Baxter, with a noble and truly characteristic frankness, conceded the futility of attempting to hold or to enforce a theoretic trinity of any kind, simply insisting that we receive the trinity as a truth related to us, in the practical uses of the life. Thus, reprobating as a flimsy conceit the solution of the scholastics, when they represent that "God's essential self-living, self-knowing, and self-loving are the trinity of persons," he says, (in a manner of irony, as against all solutions:)

"Perhaps we can do nothing better, but I believe there is yet more in the mystery of the trinity, because this is so intelligible. * * * What a person in the trinity is, all the divines and school wits as good as confess they know not. It is the trinity as *related to us*, and *operative* in us, and *therein* notified that we must necessarily believe— * * * even as it is not our understanding of the essence of the sun, but our reception of its communicated *motion, light, and heat*, that our nature liveth by."—(*Pract. Works, Vol. IV., p. 75.*)

How far this may be from the instrumental trinity I

have asserted, with so great offense to many, I leave to your judgment. I pass now,

III. TO THE ORTHODOX SENTIMENT OF THE PRESENT DAY. And here, instead of a more discursive and promiscuous reference, I prefer to single out two distinguished and generally acknowledged examples of orthodoxy, one among the Germans, and another from our own country, and confine my comparison to these.

As an example of the German school of orthodoxy, I fix on the exposition of Dr. Twesten, Theological Professor at Berlin; partly because it is accessible to all American readers, and partly because of its very great ability. The Professor's object is to vindicate the Augsburg Confession, and it is "the first elaborate attempt to uphold this doctrine in its orthodox form," as Professor Smith, the accomplished translator, informs us, that has been made in Germany since the rationalistic spirit became prevalent there. He also tells us that this exposition "awakened a new interest" in the subject, and "is uniformly referred to, in the yet more recent discussions, with respect, as an authority." His exposition will be found in three successive numbers of the "Bibliotheca Sacra," beginning with No. XI.

He assumes for his point of departure, as peremptorily as I have done, "the absolute oneness of being in God." And then the problem raised is this, whether "there be not in the divine nature that which requires us to *represent* it as consisting of several distinct subjects or persons as well as attributes?" (No. XI., p. 501.) The question turns, it will be perceived, on the word *represent*, and he

is continually saying, as in the next sentence, "*we* are obliged to *conceive* when fully expressed," "*we* are obliged," &c., as if looking for a trinity merely subjective. Indeed, he even says on the same page: "They [the attributes and persons] express the different relations in which the infinite God stands to the finite; or rather, in which finite existences stand to God." Instead of asking, in this manner, 'whether we must not represent,' 'are not obliged to conceive,' I have taken a different form of inquiry, asking whether God, regarding the media of possible representation and our finite conditions, needs not so to *represent Himself*? This, it seems to me, is a more legitimate question, though in many respects the same. Still he rests the doctrine, as every Christian must, "on the assertions of scripture," (p. 506,) and here even the appearance of diversity vanishes.

But having found the Christian fact, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he goes on next to show that there is a subjective necessity for this fact as related to our "Christian consciousness,"—that is, to our want as sinners and our practical experience as Christians. (pp. 509–515.) The God of nature and the God of grace must hold different relations to us and to each other; God must be seen working under God, God toward God; for we can not fitly work our feeling, or have it fitly worked in the experience of redemption, save as we "see a contrast between him to whom the world was to be reconciled and him who made the reconciliation;" in which he only gives play, in a particular instance, to the general truth or heresy I have asserted, that God can be fitly revealed to human thought only through the medium of contrasts

and opposing representations. But then the question rises, after the supposed "contrast" is found or appears, what is the nature and scope of it? Is it that God is not as really and completely one as if no such relation of contrast between nature and grace had been discovered to us? The answer of Dr. T. is, that God is in "both relations the same being;" only "we are obliged to form a *different conception* of this same Being," &c. (p. 510.) The trinity, then, is a different conception of God, suited to the plan of redemption and to our Christian experience under that plan. And then, if it be required to fix the limits, or define the precise nature of this difference or this contrast, he admits the difficulty of doing it "with a clearness corresponding to our inward sense of it;" or so that we must not finally rest it "on the simple declarations of the Holy Scriptures," (p. 512.) Suppose now he had said, with me, instead, 'this contrast of God with God, appearing in the trinity and the plan of redemption, is at least an instrumental verity, which we are freely to use, on scripture authority; allowing it, as a conception, to shape our consciousness and work our experience under the plan; but which we can no wise investigate as regards its interior mystery and the relation of the persons to the one divine essence.' How far would he differ, in this, from the result he states for himself; save that he would more adequately give the positive import of the trinity and more exactly fix the limits of knowledge concerning it? True, he goes on to say that "every modalistic view is excluded" by the scripture representations; but he only means the Sabellian modalistic, which differs from his own, simply in affirming his "different concep-

tion" or mode, with the addition that the trinity is nothing *but* a different conception,—a doctrine which I have as little asserted as he. And yet the doctrine of 'eternal generation' itself makes the trinity a merely internal and permanent mode of deity; that of God as eternal act.

Looking, then, at the Christian trinity simply as a, resulting fact of revelation,—a fact that must needs appear in the fit representation or expression of God to us,—we are seen to arrive at a conception of it essentially one and the same. The trinity of revelation, we both say, is the one divine essence brought into our field of thought and experience. But just here, while I am staying fast by the position where we meet, refusing to leave it, Dr. T. goes off upon a long theological excursion, and we seem to be wholly separated. However, at the very close of it, he returns, I am happy to say, to suggest, as the result and last fruit of his inquiry, as indeed of all inquiry, the possible truth of a position where Sabellianism and orthodoxy may, without difficulty, meet and adjust their differences; which position is the very one at which he left me, advanced by the addition of a single sentence. Here, then, at the end we meet again, coalescing in the same final result.

Our long divergence between the two points of agreement happens in the following manner:—The trinity we found at the first point of agreement, was a trinity resting in expression, or occurring under the laws of expression; which I insisted could as little be subjected to mere logic as a poem or a painting, and the attempting of which, logically or ontologically, would even be absurd. Or, attempting to fence off logic by logic, I argued that,

having assumed the absolute oneness of the divine essence, and found a trinity resulting under the conditions of revelation or expression within our plane of consciousness, we manifestly can not reason out or logically prove what has come to us only by the self-revelation of God ; neither can we argue from the three of revelation to a transcendental three back of it ; for, by the supposition, the transcendental substance back of it is the One. Therefore we are to accept the three as persons whose proper comprehensible verity is that they most adequately reveal the One, and there to rest ;—only it is right for us to argue (this is the “single sentence” of addition just referred to) that, since God is an eternally active self-revealing being, he is likely to be eternally acted or revealed in this manner.

But Dr. T., admitting the essentially “biblical foundation” of the doctrine, and not unaware of the many “dangers of speculation” concerning it, is yet absolutely detained by no considerations such as I have named. Modestly, therefore, cautiously, half-protestingly, he opens the gate of speculation (pp. 516–528) and enters, leaving me behind. Here he finds a shadow, a notional semblance, wherewith, as by a self-supporting web spun from within himself, he bridges the gulf between an external trinity, or trinity of expression, and the more transcendental, or psychological and speculative trinity of the church doctrine ; making good his passage over to that side.

Thus, meditating on his own personal consciousness and asking what is in it, or what it involves, he finds, included in the necessary act of self-knowledge, three terms.

First, there is the subject, the *I* or *self*. Secondly, there is the *generated image* or *objective thought* of the self, the *me*. Thirdly, there is the *reflective, unifying thought* of the self and the me as being one, which is, he imagines, a kind of common proceeding from the self and the me. And why not a fourth term also, in the consciousness that the unifying thought unifies? and a fifth in the consciousness that we are thus conscious? for it is the mystery of consciousness, logically handled, that it includes, in every act, an infinite series. But this he omits to notice,—three terms exhaust its import. Then, as God is certainly a conscious being, is he not therefore always generating, in like manner, a threefold relation within himself? And then why not imagine that he is eternally developed, in his necessary act of consciousness, as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? The self answers to the Father. The objective image or thought of the self is the Word or Son. The unifying thought is the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

But why, it is natural to ask, should God become three persons, in virtue of his consciousness, more than we? Is it not also a considerable stretch of deduction to make out, in this way, that God's plan of redemption, of which it is agreed the Christian trinity is, in some proper sense, a part or incident, is yet nothing but a *necessary* development of his consciousness! He admits (p. 520) that there are objections to such a speculation, but thinks, however, it has a degree of "value." Let us not be surprised, then, to find, by his frequent references to it afterward, that it is, in fact, a kind of regulative con-

ception or general solvent, with him, for the church theology of the whole subject.

Having got a footing, thus, for the speculative church doctrine in the immanent activity of the divine nature, he leads off in his long and toilsome excursion, *away* from the simple truth of revelation, where we found our agreement; and here I am not required to follow him. His account of the church doctrine, you will observe, however, accords exactly with mine,—one divine essence becoming a trinity, “by the absolutely *immanent acts of generation and procession*,” (No. XIII., p. 26;) and, as these are rejected by the New England orthodoxy, having of course no point of agreement with it. But the more correct he is in his representation of the church doctrine, the more sad is the evident failure he makes at every point, in his attempt to reduce it to a precise, logical, and logically vindicable statement. Never, it seems to me, was there so much of real ability and of apparently scientific candor exhausted in a work, so uniformly impotent and fruitless. Ceasing to regard the persons instrumentally, as living powers of expression, and attempting to conceive them by logical definitions of their interior properties, they immediately lose even the semblance of reality and become mere words or notions. A look of imposture meets us at every turn of the argument. The persons, defined so as to save the rigid unity of the substance, (which is the problem,) must of course include that substance in each; and then, as distinct, they can, *to us*, be only modes, in some sense, of that substance; not logical subjects having each a personal substance. They are the one substance “conceived as” acting thus or thus,

or as "having a certain hypostatic character," (No. XII., p. 764,)—such persons as may be represented best by the threefold terms of our human consciousness; which are as wide of all proper personality as the dreams of the night, or even the stones of the field, (p. 766;) *relations* and, in that sense, "modes" of the one divine essence; related to each other not as entities, (*res et res*), but as I am related to my self-comprehending thought; distinguished by a *distinctio non realis*, or a distinction only of "reason;" which, if it be called a real and objective distinction, is yet a distinction pertaining only to the active variations of a substance and not to any thing that can make a properly logical subject, (p. 771.) And then, three subjects being found, having no distinctive subjacencies; three persons, without personality; the labor is to show exactly how so many shadows of persons are logically related to each other and the world; and this will be the theologic doctrine of the trinity. It is a dogmatic dialogue between modes and relations, very difficult of course to be maintained, and requiring an immense array of the most abstruse distinctions, to keep the characters, who are right and left and middle to the same substance, in regular place and true theologic order!

But after the distinguished scholar and theologian has waded long and wearily through this desert of sand, proving nothing but the absolute futility of all attempts to find a deeper reality in the persons, than that which is apprehended by faith and a Christian experience, in their instrumental use, he at last emerges, at a place where possibly some green thing may grow, and here I meet him again in a second point of agreement,—where, as he

himself admits, we attain to the last limit of thought in regard to the whole subject. Having distinguished between eternal generation and eternal procession as internal and immanent acts of the divine nature on the one side, and the sending both of Son and Spirit as acts in time on the other, he now looks at their connection and finds reason to judge, that one is analogous to and, at the root, identical with the other. And so he concludes:—

“We may even say that the *sending*, thus viewed, is the same relation as that expressed by generation and procession; only the former is this relation viewed in its temporal aspect, the latter is the relation viewed as an eternal act. Thus is the conception of the sending the bond between the internal and external characteristics of the persons of the Trinity, the *opera ad intra* and *extra*, and forms the fitting conclusion of the doctrine, since it brings back the end to the beginning. * * Just here may, perhaps, be the highest tension and the possibility of an adjustment of the antagonism between the Orthodox and the Sabellian view of the Trinity.”—(*No. XIII*, pp. 51–2.)

Exactly so, and this “fitting conclusion of the doctrine,” (the more fit because it “brings back the end to the beginning,”) may as well be reached by a single sentence, as by traversing an immense desert of dogmatic inanities. Say nothing at all of generation, procession, sending, or of any distinctions of *opera ad intra* and *extra*—for, in truth, there is no *extra* or exterior as pertaining to God, save that we represent by that figure some of our own thoughts concerning Him,—give up all logical attempts upon the persons; give up, if you must, all the

church theology as concerned with the interior mystery of their nature and relations ; and then say simply this: God, the one divine substance, is revealed to me, in my plane of finite intelligence, formally, as three persons or personal activities ; which, though I can not investigate, I receive as media of thought and experience under Him ; only judging that, since He is the Living God, an externally active, self-revealing being in his very nature, he is likely to be known as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; or God, and Word, and Spirit ; or by some equivalent formula, forever and to all worlds.

Here you perceive that the result attained to is grounded as really in the essentially active nature of God, as it is in the doctrine of eternal generation ; and the generation and the sending, never separated and of course never to be theologically identified, are sunk in the one idea of eternal self-revelation. And now the terms of "adjustment" are simple and easy : let orthodoxy bring back the end to the beginning, and leave the immense theologic desert between to its proper solitude and silence ; let Sabellianism, on the other part, discover, behind the revelation of to-day, an eternally self-revealing nature ; and, by that time, both are one—"the conflict ceases." Only there is no "tension" or strain whatever in the process, unless it be a strain to let go so much of barren learning, called theology ; and so much pride of hasty, over-confident denial. This, exactly, is the heresy of my book. It ends at the same point with the orthodoxy of Dr. Twesten, only rejecting as of no account about all the properly theologic matter by which he reaches that point.

And then his pious and beautiful tribute to the simple trinity of the scriptures is just so much more appropriate:—"We have indeed, as every where else, so here, to wonder at the wisdom with which the scripture imparts those truths which no understanding of the wise can fathom, in a form which is intelligible even to the unlearned; since it presents the divine mysteries in that aspect in which they are most adapted [instrumentally] to our wants, so that we may rather experience their power in the heart, than speak about them in lofty words."—(*No. XIII.*, p. 56.)

I have dwelt thus particularly on the comparison between my heresy and the exposition of Dr. Twisten, not because his opinions are a law either to you or to me; but because I hoped, by means of such a comparison, to give you at once the position of one of the ripest modern defenders of orthodoxy, and, more exactly than in any other way, the real spirit and import of my own.

I proposed, also, to refer you to another modern example, from our own country. And here I fix on the article from the *Princeton Repertory*, already referred to in support of my views of language. It is an article on the "Sonship of Christ," the orthodoxy of which, I believe, has not been doubted. The object of the essay is to substantiate the doctrine of 'eternal generation;' which, though I do not profess, yet if it be defined, as here, to mean simply that there is some undiscoverable "ground in the nature of the relation of the Father and Son for the application of these relative terms," (*Princeton Theological Essays*, p. 38,) I see no reason to deny.

Nor do I any more dissent from the article in its main point, viz., that the name "Son of God" is given to Christ "in reference to his divine nature," (p. 37.) I only think that there is another question more difficult to be determined, but which is not here discussed, viz., whether, admitting or holding fast the 'divine nature,' there is not also a reference in the term Son to the generation in time and the incarnate human state; whether the phrase 'Son of God,' as far as it is a more *humanly personal* conception than the terms 'Word,' 'Wisdom,' and the like, is not caused by a reference, prophetically forward or historically backward, to the miraculous conception and the human state of Sonship in time. I suppose the writer would say that it is not. I find no means of deciding that the analogy or figure of filial relationship requires to be understood as predicated eternally of the Son, and not, possibly, of the Word or Wisdom as eternal, and of the Son as in time; —in which case, however, it would still be right to affirm the eternity of the Sonship, because of the eternity of the Wordship; for the highest reality of the Son is, of course, the divine nature, the Word, incarnate in him. With the exception of this possible disagreement, I see nothing in the essay to dissent from.

But I refer to this essay principally on account of its introductory matter, (pp. 27–37,) which is far more important than the argument itself, and reveals, in fact, a more competent theological mastery of the high subjects in question. It opens with a complaint that so little attention is paid to the proper limits of knowledge, and that "human speculations" are so constantly mixed

up in theology with revealed "facts and principles." And yet, while the "modes of conceiving the Christian doctrines" are as various as they must be, when shaped by so many "different minds in their different ages" and subject to their different forms of philosophy, there is still a remarkable agreement, the writer affirms, regarding the substantial matter of the Christian truth.

"With regard to theology, the uniformity with which the great cardinal doctrines of our faith have been embraced, is not less remarkable than the diversity which has prevailed in the mode of conceiving and explaining them. The fact that there is one God, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are this God; that there is such a distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as to lay a sufficient ground for the reciprocal use of the personal pronouns, has been the faith of the Christian Church, from first to last. And yet there is probably no one doctrine contained in the scripture, which has been so variously defined and explained as this."—(*P.* 28.)

A very admirable statement of the essential scripture doctrine of trinity, as it was practically held by the mass of true believers in the first centuries of the church. One God, sufficiently three to allow the reciprocal nominal relations of grammar. Only do not suspect that I had the terms of this statement in mind when I sketched the following language, cited from me in your Report; for I had not then seen it:—"I take the Three in their threeness as distinct grammatic personalities; as they are practically employed in the bible; acting and interacting mutually toward each other, as the bible

represents; only refusing to investigate their interior mystery [that is, trying to keep within the 'limits of knowledge' and not mix 'speculations' with 'facts and principles']—believing that, in such a use of them, I receive, in the truest and fullest manner, the One God."

The writer of the essay goes on to say that originally, when religion had not yet "passed from the heart to the head," the trinity was received in a purely simple and practical way, and created no difficulty; but that, as soon as it began to be attempted theologically by the head, it became the subject of endless contradictions and disputes. And then he adds:—"It is much to be lamented that so much animosity has been excited and so much time and labor wasted on points of dispute, which arose from the imperfection of human language, or the weakness of the human mind. There has this good effect, however, resulted from these controversies, that the church has been driven from one unguarded mode of expression to another, until it has come back to the simple statement of the Word of God, and *consented to leave the inexplicable unexplained.*"—(P. 28.)

If I differ at all from this, I differ only in doubting whether it is yet quite true, and doing what I can to make it so—which, if the result is so desirable, ought not to be a crime. Indeed, I have done nothing else but to show exactly why endless contrarieties and disputes must result from the attempt to settle a theology of the subject, or to handle it under logical conditions; that a revelation of the One involves a necessity of expression under conditions of antinomy or repugnance, that are insoluble by any logical treatment, and can lead to

nothing but absurdity, unless they are accepted and used, according to their nature, as instruments of expression. Therefore I said nothing but simply this—let us go ‘back to the simple statement of the Word of God and consent to leave the inexplicable unexplained.’

This coincidence, too, is the more remarkable, when it is observed that the writer of the essay notices the very conditions of antinomy and formal repugnance of which I spoke, and disallows all a priori and logical arguments, on the basis of such formal repugnances. He says:—

“If it be allowable to demand how the divine essence can be communicated from the Father to the Son and yet retained by the Father? the [orthodox] objector must submit to a similar demand, how three distinct persons can have the *same numerical essence*? how God can be in heaven and on earth at the same time, and yet not partly in one and partly in the other? It is evident that when we speak thus we use words nearly without meaning; [he should say ‘logical meaning;’ for they have meaning enough taken as instruments of use and powers of expression;] human language is so little adapted to the things of God, and our [logically definable] knowledge is so limited, that we may be said not to know what we say or whereof we affirm.

* * * We say that the Father and the Son have the same numerical essence, and yet we say that the Son became incarnate and the Father did not; that is, that the same numerical essence did and did not become incarnate. Is it not something worse than useless for us, to speculate so confidently on subjects at such an

infinite remove above our conceptions, and to avail ourselves with so much confidence of the most dangerous of all arguments, the *reductio ad absurdum*, when applied to subjects like the present? We are, however, no advocates for the definition [of Sonship] under consideration; not because we consider the a priori arguments against it just and conclusive, but because we can not find that it is founded on the clear statements of the Word of God, and because we regard it as one of the vain attempts to bring down, by formulas and definitions, the infinite mysteries of the Godhead, within the grasp of man's finite intellect."—(pp. 34 & 35-6.)

I am justified here, you observe, in about every thing really distinctive in the argument of my discourse at New Haven; only the writer seems to report an excess of nothingness, in the meaning of language as applied to it, which I was careful to avoid. I have only to add that, when the writer sets himself to a deliberate statement of what is essential to be held as regards the trinity, I find nothing to dissent from in the terms of his statement. His statement is this—

"What the nature of this relation [that of the Father and Son] is, the scriptures have not revealed, and we therefore can not undertake to decide. It will not be denied that much evil has been produced by the attempt to reduce to distinct formulas the general truths of the Bible; nor that many have been led to reject this, as well as other doctrines of the Word of God, from the difficulties with which they conceived the definitions of them to be encumbered. Calvin long ago exclaimed:—'I could even wish that the names [trinity, homou-

sion, person] were buried and forgot, if only this could be the accepted faith of all : that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God ; with the addition merely [as against the Sabellians] that the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished by a peculiar property.'—(Inst. Lib. I., chap. 13, sec. 5.) It might, with equal propriety, be desired that theologians had contented themselves with asserting the bible fact on this subject, without attempting to decide whether Christ was the Son of God by emanation, communication of essence, or merely by oneness of nature."—(p. 33.)

A fine condensation of all my heresies ; viz., the impossibility of investigating the persons ; the certain mischiefs resulting from the attempt ; the practical affirmation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God ; the negative against the Sabellians, a condition already shown (p. 161-4) to be sufficiently met ; and then the fine wide margin left for liberty to say, exactly what has been the head of my offending, that Christ is the Son "merely by oneness of nature" If now this critic is the same that has lately been demanding my excision, it may properly enough be said for him, I know, that such is the progress he has made in the exercise of twenty years ! How fortunate then that he was not cut off in the green of his heresy, and the future lictor of orthodoxy stifled, by the church, in his growth. And who can tell what advances I too may make, if only I am spared.

I will pursue the comparison no farther. The result of it plainly is, that while I am seen to have departed from the church doctrine in no manner that is irrecon-

cilable, the orthodoxy of New England is found to be only a very plain and palpable heresy. Would it not be well to inquire (which is a matter, in my estimation, of much greater consequence) whether it is not also as palpably false?

One thing more, in conclusion, I think it is my duty to suggest, and yours very seriously to consider, viz., that, however my doctrine of trinity may stand with the formulas, no difference will be observed between the practical ordinary language of preaching under it and that which is used by you all; and this I should suppose to be a matter of a good deal more importance than a mere abstractive coincidence in a few words and syllables of theory. The only diversity that could ever appear, in preaching, would be, when a theoretic scheme, or objections to a theoretic scheme of the trinity are under immediate discussion. Suppose, then, I were held up by you as unsound in the faith, or excluded from fellowship on this account; it would be simply and only because I would not profess some kind of belief touching the interior economy and structure of God. It would not be that I am any the less truly a lover of the doctrine of trinity as related to the life of religion and the working of Christian experience; but only that I would not venture some opinion regarding the psychological nature and history of the persons of the Trinity. You would declare, in that manner, to the world, that it is not enough to preach, pray, worship, climb up unto God through an experience shaped in the molds of Trinity, but that the principal matter is to receive it as a theorem.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

It is no disappointment to me, however deeply I regret the disturbance suffered by my brethren, that the doctrine of Christ and his work, maintained in my discourse at Cambridge, has encountered so many and severe censures. I could only have been disappointed if the censures had shown a better appearance of agreement among themselves. Contrary to this, they are such for the most part in their form, and such in their mutual disagreement, as I expected, and they come in the manner I expected them to come; viz., by seizing on single turns of expression, or single parts of the argument, and subjecting them to the same logical method of inference and construction, which, heretofore, has been so hard a practice on the terms of scripture themselves. The principal source of difficulty has been that no sufficient pains have been taken, to reproduce and conceive the view presented as a whole; adjusting the import, in part, of single members and clauses in the argument, by their relation to that whole. Perhaps it is impossible for me to repair the defect; but I wish my brethren could believe me when I say that, while their inferences are so abundantly true and necessary to them, I admit scarcely one of them, in the sense which makes it an offense, or a dangerous error to themselves. On the contrary, I seem, in almost every case, to hold, as earnestly as they, though under a

different form or a different resolution of the subject, all which they suppose me to deny. The matter of their gospel, separated from their logical or theological system, is the matter of mine ; and the only reason why they do not see it to be so themselves is that they have reduced the matter to the tiny measures of their system ; so that when it is set forth, apart from the measures,—not as expiation only, but as the Eternal Life that was with the Father and was manifested unto us ; Christ the Wisdom of God and the Power ; God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,—the quantities are so large and the riches so various that the matter of their system appears to be lost, they can not find it. And what, then, shall they infer but heresy ? Much as if some child, or oversimple person, were to judge that immense piles of coin, at the mint, must be counterfeit, because he can not find his particular dollar among them.

Perhaps it may soften a little the apprehensions that some have suffered, if, before I enter on the new exposition I design to offer, I notice briefly a few of the misconceptions that have been advanced as objections against the doctrine of my discourse.

One very fruitful cause of alarm has been that the negative and destructive part of my argument has been supposed, in the view of others, to mean more and really to destroy more, than it does in my own. Accustomed to see the whole truth of the subject in the logical form or points of formula against which I was reasoning, (pp. 192–202,) they were not able, finding these all swept away, to imagine that any thing was left. Whereas, in

my own view, I was only sweeping away the logical matter of these representations, to assert again, with greater force, all which constitutes the inmost and properly evangelic substance of their beliefs, in the use of them. When this negative part of my argument was ended, the whole subject to them was ended; while to me it was only begun. Accordingly, you will find that these negative reasonings are constantly set forth by them, as being words spoken against the temple,—conclusive heresies, which even make it a virtue to stop their ears to all that may be said afterward. Meantime, I am going on myself, as just having come to the subject, to “reclaim and restore” (p. 203) every thing that has been cast away; that is every thing but the points of theory rejected. But I go alone; they do not follow me. Or if they seem to follow, it is simply to find the offense justified, and not to see it removed. Thus, where most I required patience and, if I had needlessly offended, forbearance and a gratuitous extension of candor, to apprehend the real meaning of my doctrine; or to discover what it is that makes it true to myself, (true in the sense of containing all they suppose to be rejected,) I seem to have failed of a proper hearing altogether. Endeavoring to set forth a view of Christ and his work that has its reality and value in forms that carry effect through the imagination and the heart, I have only wounded logic for an auditor, and that not hearing, it would seem, but only asking for redress. Accordingly, of all the numerous articles which I have seen complaining of my heresies in regard to this subject, I recollect not one that has attempted any real and proper discussion of just

those twenty pages of my book, (pp. 218–238,) on which I most relied to quiet the fears and satisfy the convictions of my brethren. More generally they are not even noticed or alluded to, and it might even be supposed that, by some accident of the press, they had been omitted. It is not that these pages have not been read, if by reading is meant seeing the letters and syllables; but it is that they have been read in a way to see no meaning in them. Or, if it be said that they have no meaning, it is not because they do not recognize, in the fullest manner, the necessity of a ground of justification, and show as fully what that ground of justification is,—Christ our righteousness, Christ sanctifying, by his death and sacrifice, the violated law, and preparing, thus, a way of pardon that makes it, not an act of license, but of justification. If this had been allowed and only some fault found with the manner in which he is represented to have executed his design, the ill fortune of these twenty pages would have been less remarkable.

I know not whether it can now be of any use to add that, in my course of argument, discarding first the logical matter of so many confused theories, and then restoring the whole subject in the simpler forms of practical and scriptural expression, I seem only to have done, more fully, what others have seen as truly the necessity of doing, if we are to escape an innumerable brood of logical perversities. Thus Dr. Griffin says, in his work on the Atonement:—

“There are certain figurative expressions in common use in the church, partly derived from the scriptures and partly of human invention, which are calculated to pre-

sent to the imagination, in a summary and striking manner, without the process of reasoning, the general influence of Christ's mediation. This advantage gives them (at least a part of them) a claim to be retained in our prayers and our popular discourses. But the difficulty is that they have been introduced into logical discussions, with a literal meaning; and as premises from which literal conclusions are drawn. This has been one of the most prolific sources of mistake. The expressions are such as these: that Christ *purchased* the church, that he *paid their debt*, that he is *one* with them, that their sins were *imputed* to him, that he *bore the curse of the law* in their stead, that he *satisfied divine justice* for them, that his righteousness is *imputed* to them and that they are *considered* righteous."—(pp. 113-4.)

Excuse me if I suggest the possibility that, when you have reduced this roll of figures to their true figurative position, you will find yourselves confronted by about all the heresies in which I have offended, and will have about as little left of the logical matter I have rejected. If Dr. Griffin, disallowing these figures, still retained other figures as literal truths and centers of speculative system, though every way as figurative as these, it is not my fault that I have justified and executed his conviction more faithfully than he did it himself. Neither should it be any offense, if, instead of suggesting the possible propriety of retaining these figures in "prayer and popular discourse," I insist on retaining them all as the Divine Form and true doctrine of the Christian grace itself; for it does not appear that Christ came to save theologians, but to save the world; and, therefore, what he is to the

uses of prayer and popular discourse would seem to be the real and true doctrine. The worst fault I can have committed will, in this view, be that I have only shown how the sinners of mankind may be saved by him, and not how they may be saved scientifically.

Descending to the notice of a few points of difficulty or censure that are more subordinate and particular, it is often alleged as a fatal heresy that I reject the opinion that Christ "suffers evil in direct substitution for the evil, or penal suffering, that was due from us." (p. 194.) Doubtless this may well enough be taken as a heresy, by those who believe that Christ was literally punished for our sins, or suffered penally on account of them. But this is a doctrine openly discarded by most of the teachers of New England. They hold, instead, that God only expresses in the sufferings of Christ what he would express by our punishment, and that one expression is substituted for the other as a ground of justification. And exactly this is what I have asserted. The only difference is that we do not exactly agree as to the mode in which the expression is made. It is agreed between us that the death of Christ is not penal, but demonstrative; that God wants no suffering to satisfy his resentments, but only that, to save the integrity of his character and the authority of his government, he must needs declare his righteousness in the remission of sins. When the question is, why must Christ suffer? we take the answer of Baxter in his "Family Catechism"—"To be an expiatory sacrifice for sin. God thought it not meet, as he was the just and holy Ruler of the world, to forgive sin without such a *demonstration* of his holiness and justice, as might

serve as well to the ends of his government, as if the sinners had suffered themselves."

What now if I have denied that this "demonstration" was made in a given way; that is by penal suffering, or by the expression of suffering, regarded as a laying on upon Christ of the direct abhorrence of God to sin? Suppose I maintain that the suffering life and death of Christ avail to make an expression equally efficacious to the same end, by another method, (pp. 218-38,) is that a fatal heresy? Suppose I argue that there is no place for laying abhorrence upon Christ, unless our sins (which is impossible) are literally and really transferred to him—that his person can not be abhorred, nor his character, nor his place, nor his office, nor his work, nor any thing else but simply our sin, which is not by any supposition his; agreeing, meantime, that, by "implication" or indirectly, he does express the abhorrence of God to sin as profoundly as it is possible to be done even by punishment itself, (p. 237 and 272-3;) is this an abuse of my Christian liberty, or a fatal departure from the faith?

But I have said that the expression of God, which is made in the sufferings of Christ, and which avails to our justification, is real and efficacious only in virtue of the fact that it is incidental, (pp. 201-2,) being what he suffers not in the ostentation of suffering, or having that as the direct object of his mission, but what he suffers in his grand attempt to regenerate the world and re-establish the lost union of souls with the divine nature. I have also represented that every thing done by Christ, in preparing a way of justification for sinners, is done only as the subordinate part or condition of a work that is more

comprehensive, viz., the renovation or spiritual quickening of lost men. But if, nevertheless, I affirm the *indispensable necessity* of this part or condition, subordinate though it be; if I say that, in order to make pardon a want as well as to make it safe, it must be dispensed as justification, or so dispensed as to cut off all appearance of license and establish, before and upon all consciences, the authority and sanctity and certain perpetuity of the law violated by transgression, (pp. 219-272;) is it then a breach upon the doctrine of justification that I affirm its necessity for a double reason? If it is necessary, first, for the subordinate reason commonly asserted, and then, secondly, to disturb the evil conscience of transgression so as to prepare that spiritual quickening, which is the comprehensive reason and last end of all, then it would seem to be made quite as necessary under a double necessity as under a single.

No, my offense here is simply this, that I make so much more of Christ, than is sometimes made in our meager theories and formulas, as to reflect dishonor on them by the excess. Here, I think, is the bottom of my offense. And it is a kind of offense which it is difficult to soften by any kind of apology. I must violate my faith as a disciple, my spiritual consciousness, all my experience of Christ, every Christian feeling of my bosom, even to think of mitigating the sharpness of my offense by any words of explanation or concession. I look into our treatises of theology, and they tell me that these two elements constitute the gospel of our salvation. First, that Christ has come between us and the judicial desert of our sins, which they call distinctively the atone-

ment. Secondly, that he has purchased the Holy Spirit who, after pardon has been made possible, is by his secret efficiency to renew such as he will to salvation. Connected with this, it is held as a theory by many that human character, under sin, is wholly disabled, as regards any quickening influence addressed to thought and discovered in that way to feeling. No approach, in this direction, of the divine love and patience, is means to an end, they say, as regards the regeneration of the soul; or can be of any avail, save to exasperate the malignity of sin. On one hand, then, we have a gate of pardon opened by a legal provision; on the other, the Holy Spirit blowing where it listeth; but there is no Son of Man lifted up between, to draw us unto God, and impregnate our fallen affections with the divine love. The two dry factors above named constitute the gospel.

It is no gospel, but only a dull mechanical contrivance of theology. Christ the wisdom of God and the power; Christ the manifested life; Christ the image of the invisible God, who is to shine into our hearts and give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; Christ lifted up to draw all men unto him; Christ in whom we are to be changed from glory to glory; God manifest in the flesh; God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; is not here. Therefore, I say, this is not the gospel; it is only a speculative figment, cold and dry, which scholastics have schemed for us, in the petty measures of the scientific understanding. Between the two points here affirmed, justification on one side, and the grace of the Spirit on the other—that a mere possibility, as it is commonly regarded; this an inscru-

table subjective agency—Christ the Living Word appears and is lifted up to be a gospel of power in the world's feeling. As a country lies within its linear boundaries, so he spreads out here as a vast realm of sunlight and warmth, variegated prospect, streams of living waters, and trees of healing. Here pre-eminently is that Christ WHOM we preach—God with men; God, in his love and essential divinity, organically united with the human state, and become an active force in the outward history of the race; God manifested to feeling, and breathed, as an atmosphere of life, into the world. I look into the New Testament and I find fifty passages that represent Christ as having come to 'regenerate,' 'quicken,' 'wash,' 'cleanse,' 'purify,' 'purge,' 'sanctify,' 'new create,' and set in God as 'branches in the vine,' to one that speaks of him as a ground of mere judicial acceptance. Some of these passages, which expressly declare it as the end of his mission to regenerate holiness in human character, I have cited; (pp. 190–1;) and I could have cited hundreds of corresponding passages, all representing, in one way or another, that Christ came to bring God's pure love and presence down to our human feeling, and hide the all regenerating leaven of divinity in the alienated and bitter history of the world. Then, the Holy Spirit working as a subjective grace within, to open inlets there for Christ lifted up as an objective grace and power without, Christ is formed in the soul, and it speaks out the new consciousness it has of life, saying,—Christ liveth in me. And so we are washed, sanctified, justified in the name [or power] of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

This to me is the gospel, and I must preach it. If you forbid me in doing it, then I must take my part with Christ and not with you; for when it comes to be a matter of choice between Him and you, it should not be difficult to prefer a whole Savior without you, to a fractional theologic Savior with you. And yet there is no such diversity between us, as may seem, in this alternative, to be implied. This theologic Savior, after all, is not the Savior that you preach. Some of you, I presume, hold a view of Christ essentially or practically one with that which I have sketched—I should do you wrong to hint that you do not—and you all preach in this manner at times, whatever may be your theology. You preach Christ as a power, the constraining love of Christ, the cross as a cross of love and healing. You say, For God so loved the world. You say, in Christ's name, Come unto me. When you preach justification, it is the 'justification of life.' This is the power of your preaching. Without this, whatever conviction of sin you produce, you well understand, is only a dry and sterile anguish. By this you dissolve the obstinacy, melt the hardness, draw the reluctance, and fructify the incapacity of sin. Even when you rejoice in the atonement, and preach it as the wisdom of God, it is not the mere legal justification of theology that makes the preaching fruitful; but it is, in great part, what you say of Christ, one side of the mere theory—his mysterious sacrifice, his love, the manner of his life, the scene of his passion—that has so great effect. So that if you can not suffer my doctrine, I shall at least know that you preach it, and shall only regret that you preach it against your

theology, when it would be so much better to make it your theology itself.

Again, it seems to be imagined by many that, in the interpretation I have given to the terms of the altar, such as 'sacrifice,' 'propitiation,' 'ransom,' 'the bearing of our sin,' and other substitutional forms of expression, I have quite dissipated their meaning, or explained them away. This certainly was not my design. I seem, on the contrary, to have found a most real and powerful meaning for them all; a meaning of so great value that they are endeared to me a hundred fold, and made to be a hundred fold more sacred by means of it. I hope I may be able, in another place, to bring some relief to your anxieties on this subject. I only wish to say here that a part of the difficulty experienced by many in my representations, appears to be due to a want of exercise in the matter of objective and subjective language, a want which I can not wholly supply; and probably a much greater part to the fact that such as are most disturbed have really no definite notion of what they mean themselves, by the terms in question. I discover this fact in private conversations continually. It is objected, for example, that I deny the *sacrifice* of Christ. Yes, I deny any thing and every thing of the outward form of sacrifice in the death of Christ, and so does the objector. Or, if not, he sees at a glance that he must. Perhaps he has thought and been accustomed to say that he holds the *literal* sacrifice of Christ. But the moment his attention is held to the subject a little more closely, he sees that he can not hold the literal, in the sense of an outward, formal sacrifice. Then, admitting

this, the question rises, what does he hold? A spiritual sacrifice certainly, one that is analogical to the outward sacrifice of the altar, and of which that is a type or figure. So of all the substitutional terms in question. And then, pressing the subject to a settlement, he will go to investigating all these terms, in their outward ritual form, to find what spiritual import and power they, as figures, are best qualified to express; and he will find that he is carried, by a regular and necessary process, in just the direction I have taken. I will venture, in short, to affirm that whoever of you will undertake to settle precisely what he himself means by the sacrifice of Christ, after rejecting the idea of a formal outward sacrifice, will come to a result so nearly identical with my supposed heresy, that he can not show the difference. Nothing will prevent his doing it, unless it be that he relapses, unconsciously and without knowing it, into a construction of the word that really identifies the spiritual sense with the outward form; instead of holding the latter as a type and figure only of the former, separated from it, of course, as the sign from the signified. For this is the most common and most fruitful source of error in the use of words, that we first deny their literality, and then, re-assuming what we have denied, go on to make the figure the very essence and measure of the truth.

I must therefore require it of you, first, and before you blame the interpretation I have given, to settle precisely what you mean yourselves by the terms in question. Begin with a fixed denial of the outward sacrifice and the literal bearing of our sins, and then,

holding fast your denial, settle, in the positive, what you do mean. Then, and not till then, are you qualified to pronounce on my error. And if this work requires a year, or ten years of patient search and labor, as it has cost me double that time, then adjourn your inquiry and wait till the qualification is ready. For when ambiguity takes the seat of judgment, attended by jealousy and panic, her two powerful solicitors, there is no one who can stand. Truth is no defense before such a tribunal.

Excuse these plain suggestions. I make them, not as having any certain application to you, but simply because of what I discover, every day, in the private intercourse of conversation. Meantime, having noticed, in this manner, some of the particular topics of difficulty in the doctrine of my book, I go on, from this point, to open a new discussion of the whole subject.

Neglecting subordinate and less important distinctions, four principal views or classes of view are asserted concerning Christ and his sacrifice; that which regards it as having effect on God, to procure release or pardon; that which regards it as having this effect on God, and so, by the obligation of endearment thus produced, an effect on man or human character; that which regards it as operative wholly on man; and that which regards it as operative wholly on man, but, in order to this with greater efficiency, as representatively operative on God. The first may be called the objective view; the second the objective-subjective; the third the subjective; and the fourth the subjective-objective. Let us glance at these in their order; the object being to attain to a

distinct conception of the last, which is the view I have asserted. I only premise that the terms *objective* and *subjective*, employed in this connection by others, especially by some of the German theologians, are not used in a sense exactly coincident with that which I find it necessary to give them, and therefore my intended meaning in them must be derived from my own uses, and not, to any great extent, from theirs.

I. THE OBJECTIVE. It is agreed by us all, that Christ, by his mission to the race, or by his life and death, has produced some effect; and of course an effect that falls somewhere, terminates on some object that receives it. Then, if we ask where in the universe does it fall, what object receives it, some teachers make answer by saying that God receives it; that it acts on God, "satisfies God's justice, propitiates God, appeases the wrath of God," and so procures terms of forgiveness to sinners. This, rigidly affirmed and adhered to, is what I have called the objective doctrine.

It is a view which many do certainly assert in words, and which many really think they hold; a view which I supposed to be holden self-understandingly, as you will judge from some expressions in my book. But I am led, on a closer examination, to doubt whether it is actually held by any, except by the half-discriminating many, who rest in crude conceptions the real force and limit of which they have never ascertained. They are not the orthodox professors or expounders of the doctrine, but their over-literal disciples; and the language they employ is what Mr. Symington refers to, when he speaks of "the misconceptions of friends,"—friends, that

is, who represent "the disposition of Jehovah to be changed, by the Savior's sacrifice, from wrath to kindness;" a mistake which is to be "viewed with unmingled disapprobation and regret."—(*Sym. Atonement*, p. 22.)

Accordingly you will find that, when the question is raised, whether, after all, the atonement does not proceed from the love of God instead of procuring that love; or, what is the same thing in a different form, whether God is not essentially unchangeable in his dispositions; all the more capable investigators, such as Calvin, Baxter, and Symington, are obliged to make some answer that virtually rejects the idea of an effect on God, by the sufferings and death of Christ, however strongly they may seem to affirm it in other parts of the argument, when this particular point is out of sight. I shall bring you passages, in another place, from all these writers, where, having this point in view, they are seen to affirm the very doctrine which constitutes my heresy; passages which distinctly declare that the effect of Christ's death is immediately, in that sense wholly, on man, and only mediately on God.

Meantime, if they argue for the atonement as "a satisfaction of the justice of God," they will say that they speak in "the language of *government* not of *passion*." (*Sym.* p. 27.) And they fall into an appearance of confusion, it will also be found, by not carefully and sharply tracing the line or course of the effect wrought, and distinguishing, in that manner, how it terminates in the result of justification. Thus, if we take the mitigated view more commonly held in New England, that which regards the sufferings and death of Christ as affording an

expression of the divine abhorrence to sin, equal to that which would be made by the actual punishment of transgression, and so, as being substituted for that punishment; this scheme, you will see, supposes that the first effect is wholly in men, or at least in the subjects of government in this and other worlds, and not on God himself. For what is "expression" but the correlate of impression, measured by impression, nothing without impression. Indeed, the true definition itself of expression is, that it is that which communicates or impresses something. Besides what, according to the supposition, is wanted, in the way of government or justification, is to impress on subjects that which will adequately preserve, in them, the authority of law, when punishment is remitted. Accordingly the first, or immediate effect, is wrought in men as subjects, and then mediately, through that, God is able to hold a different governmental attitude to sinners, to forgive or justify.

Or take the less mitigated doctrine, that Christ actually bears the penalty of transgression, and that so the justice of God is executed on his person, as bearing the sins of the world. Then rises the question, what is penalty, where lies its value? In the expression it makes of God to his subjects certainly, not in the immediate satisfaction it gives to himself. But here again expression to subjects is impression in subjects. It is made for impression and in that has its end. The object of penalty, then, is public impression,—no matter by whom it is suffered. Whatever has value as punishment, has that value in virtue of the impressions it yields. If Christ bears the penalty, then Christ in bearing it, were there any thing

but absurdity in the thought, is to make the impression of penalty on men or the subjects of God ; and there, in that first effect, is, in one view, the ground of justification ; the precise heresy by which I have startled or offended so many, when I say (p. 254) that "in one view the ground of justification is subjectively prepared in us ; viz., in a state, or impression, or sense of the sacredness of law, produced in us by Christ's life and death."

It will also be made clear, by a much shorter method, that the immediate, or first effect of Christ's work, can not be on God ; for the simple reason that Christ in the highest import of his person is God. For, take what view we may of the three persons, he is not *other* than God. Then, if we hold this point firmly and do not intermit our faith ; to say that God, by acting on himself, or by acting right and left in himself, satisfies his own justice and works out the terms or even the awards of government, wholly within the circle of deity, without passing out of that circle, will appear to every one to be the simplest form of absurdity. But if Christ be regarded as passing out of the circle of deity, to produce an effect in subjects, then and so to enable the divine government to open a new relation of pardon, in virtue of that effect or impression,—a change that may be objectively described as taking place in God,—the absurdity vanishes. It is not that God is changed, but only that, having other conditions and possibilities before him prepared in the impressions of men, he may dispense other terms, or open other relations with the guilty, without any infringement of governmental order.

I come, in this manner, to the conclusion that the ob-

jective view, in question, is not really held by competent theologians of any school, however it may seem to be, in much of the language they employ. Thus Mr. Symington affirms (p. 25) that the atonement has a "bearing on God," and even represents it to be "the office" itself of Christ, "to appease the wrath of the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," (p. 163;) and yet his concessions (p. 27) require us to understand his language, in such forms of expression, as relating only to the change of administration, accomplished in and through a mediate effect or impression in subjects. He says, indeed, (p. 21,) that the work of Christ is not "the *cause* of divine love, mercy or grace, but the *medium* through which these perfections of God find expression to guilty creatures." He only does not see distinctly that this expression, considered as producing an impression in us or in subjects, is also *mediate* as being the ground of that change of administration by which the guilty are forgiven.

II. THE OBJECTIVE-SUBJECTIVE; that which regards the work of Christ as having an effect on God, to procure release or pardon, and so, by the obligation of endearment produced, an effect on man or human character. This view must fall, of course, with the other on which it depends. Not that no such obligation of endearment is produced, or that it has no effect. But as there is no effect wrought in God, save one that is mediate and is based in impressions made in men, (that being the only *real* change that is wrought,) the true statement must be, that God, having prepared a ground of justification by impressions made in us, or in his subjects of this and

other worlds, and so released our liabilities, has *thus* endeared himself to our feeling and become a renovating power in our love. That is, God, by one subjective effect, has obtained the power of another—by the sanctifying of his law in our impressions, has prepared the release of our punishment and so has won a place in our love and character. In this way the supposed secondary effect, which is certainly real, is seen to result only from another, equally subjective.

III. THE SUBJECTIVE; that which regards the work of Christ as operative wholly on man. We have seen this to be true already; for if we take that form of doctrine which comes nearest to affirming that the effect of Christ's work is objective and is wrought in God; viz., the doctrine that Christ actually bore the penalty of human transgression in his sufferings and death; even that, when sounded to the bottom, supposes that the first effect and the real change is wrought in us, or in subjects; having its value in the fact that it produces impressions of the justice or righteousness of God and the integrity and sanctity of his law,—the same which punishment itself would have produced.

But this is a matter wholly distinct from the conceptions of those who, in later times, have asserted what is called a subjective view of the work of Christ, as an operative cause in the renewing of sinful character. These latter think of nothing but simply of a regenerative movement on the world, and set their doctrine against the other, raising a question of choice between the two. Accordingly, it enters not into their account,

that any thing is done or need be to produce impressions which fortify law and government in the administration of pardon. Their doctrine is that Christ reconciles us to God, not that he reconciles God to us ; and by the latter and negative part, they suppose themselves to deny, or drop out of place, every thing that looks for a compensative or substitutional force, in the way of justification. Justification is simply the making men just,—nothing more.

Contrary to this I am endeavoring, not to set one view against the other, but to find a point where they coalesce and become one. And I find the effect of Christ's work to be as really subjective in one as in the other. I say that Christ came to reconcile us to God, and that this is the whole account of his mission. And then that, in order to this, it is necessary that pardon should be offered, in a way to exclude every feeling of license, and preserve in us the deepest impression of the authority and sanctity of law and the immutable justice of God. How else can we be made to care for our sins, or to want any release from their condemnation ; which is the first condition of a regenerative movement? (pp. 219 and 272.) And so, every thing in the doctrine of Christ is brought down to the one point of subjective impression, as related to the power of spiritual obligation and the regeneration of souls in the divine image. The work is one and simple, and the term 'justification' covers the whole of it. We may distinguish, in idea, the part which relates to a preservation of the authority of law, from that which does not ; but we must not separate them in fact. Still it is all impression, subjective impression, and the end is our reconciliation to God.

To make the relation of my doctrine to the later doctrine, commonly called subjective, yet more explicit, it may be well to bring this latter more distinctly into view and state my exceptions to it.

The best example of it, familiar to our American public, is that which is offered in the writings of Mr. Coleridge. Christ, to him, is a power,—the wisdom of God and the power. He is God manifest, God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. His work has no effect on God. Its whole effect and value is subjective. It operates a change in the attitude of the divine only in and through a change of character operated in us; even our spiritual renovation in goodness. In this view, many of the most distinguished evangelical teachers of Germany, including Dr. Marsh and others of our own country, substantially concur.

I should violate my most sacred convictions not to profess that, in whatever is positive in these representations, I also concur. I will go farther and say that, compared with our common theologic gospel, they are the true gospel. They shock no moral sensibility. They are full of divine warmth and power. They set the work of Christ in a posture of intense sublimity. They meet our deepest wants as sinners. They fill and transform whatever heart will turn itself to receive them. When I speak of them, I feel myself impelled to drop all thought of personal issues, and speak of nothing else but simply to entreat your earnest attention to this more vital and quickening view of the gospel; bending your studies, and, with your studies, centering your most earnest prayers on Christ, as a gift of Life to men,—the incarnate Lord, ap-

proaching guilty souls on their human level, and suffering them to break their enmity across his patience. You may do some good, I know, by preaching a gospel that consists, theoretically, in preparing the mere legal possibility of release from punishment; for there will commonly be a power in the preaching that does not measure itself by the meager theory of the preacher; but you can never preach CHRIST to men, till you preach him as the quickening power of God; the way, the truth, and the life, and, so, the Savior of the world. It is not preaching Christ to preach about him as a Savior closeted in death before some invisible throne of law, whose rigor he softens by forensic transactions. He must be preached as living and dying openly, with and before us; preached as a person, the manifested love, and beauty, and patience of God—God with us, present to our sympathy, in terms of human brotherhood.

But, while I avow this most hearty assent to the view of Christ's work, which regards it as being designed to operate wholly on men; while I fail to discover any *positive* error in it; I feel bound, also, to acknowledge that, in the form given it by Coleridge and his disciples, it has two very important defects which need to be supplied.

It fails, in the first place, to find any natural and proper meaning for the objective terms of the altar. It treats them in precisely the same way as it does the figures of mere natural language applied to him; such, for example, as, *debt*, *payment*, *price*, and the like, which are casual only in their mode of occurrence. Whereas the terms derived from the liturgical system of the altar

are wholly artificial preparations, and the system itself is declared to be appointed of God, to be a figure and form and so a language, for the higher sacrifice and the nobler remission of a new covenant, afterward to be given. It is an outward religion of sense, prepared to be the mold of an inward religion of spirit. But, in the view of Mr. Coleridge, these terms, prepared by God, have no special value and may even be disused. Still there is nothing for us to do, but to receive the historic matter of the incarnation, and apply it subjectively as a curative medicine to our own character. It holds the mind, thus, in a state of vicious subjectivity, which very much hinders the power of Christ as a grace offered to faith, in the simple terms of the altar. And, for precisely this reason, the view is regarded by most Christians, as being wholly remote from that which is the joy of all true experience; or it is even looked upon by many, as a doctrine that is cross to the plan of the gospel itself.

The other defect alluded to is even more serious. It makes nothing of justification, save in the sense that it brings the soul out of sin into a state of faith and peace, by a change of spiritual character. It lays no ground of justification. The law, desecrated by sin, is not vindicated or set in authority, by any other manifestation of God's righteousness, in place of that which punishment would have yielded. To pardon, therefore, is merely to let go, out of a spirit of divine clemency, apart from all care of governmental order and authority. There is nothing left, in this view, to maintain a sense of law, or keep a conscience alive in us. And so the result will be that, having no care for our sins, no impression of them or

trouble on account of them, we shall be as indifferent to mercy as to sin, and the whole work of Christ will fail of its power.

In this view the doctrine of many Unitarians coincides, as nearly as it is possible, in connection with the different view they maintain of the person of Christ. I am well aware of the disrespect, felt in this quarter, to any and all speculations that suppose a necessity of some ground of pardon, distinct from the mere paternity of God, and I think I could easily account for it. The word 'justification,' as distinct from pardon, is virtually disallowed or proscribed; or, if it be retained in use, the meaning allowed to it differs in no degree from that of the word 'sanctification.' However much I could sympathize with the repugnance they feel to many of the representations associated with this word, I feel quite sure that the loss they suffer, in rejecting it, is irreparable and great beyond what they conceive. It is no real or sufficient gospel to preach paternity to men. No sinner stops in his sins, because God is a name for paternity. What cares he for the paternity of God, until a voice of condemnation from God's holy inviolable law is heard ringing in his soul to make paternity a need and call out the want, in his bosom, of some grace that may save him from the just demerit of his sin? A first condition, therefore, in the restoration of man, is that he be made to see the iron substructure of eternal government jutting up around him and hear it reverberating under his feet. And, in order to this, pardon must come in a way of governmental order. It must be more than pardon—justification. It may not be necessary that something should be

done, to save or vindicate the honor and sanctity of the law before the people of the Zodiac; but it must be done before him. He must have impressions made in him that answer to government, not merely to paternity; and he must see that no salvation is adequate, save that which can open a passage through government, without any breach upon its integrity and order. Without this, all that is said about paternity will cease, at length, to be any thing better than a watery pathos, dissolving in its own insipidity. The paternity, magnified and preached as a gospel, will turn out, in the end, to be simple nepotism.

This, at least, is my conviction. The gospel of Christ can not have its power without justification, in some real and proper sense of the term, distinct from pardon on one side, and sanctification on the other. And such, most clearly, is the view of the scriptures; which, if any one disregards, or explains away, the penalty of impotence will assuredly follow. More than once do they write "righteousness" and "sanctification," "justify" and "sanctify," in the same sentence; not surely as repetitions of the same idea, but as somehow or in some degree distinct and different one from the other. They not only speak of Christ as the "manifested Life," but as "set forth, also, to declare the righteousness of God, that *God* may be just." All the apostolic writings are full of this distinction, and it is this which gives their representations a sonorous and reverberative temperament of so great energy. They make the work of God ring about the conscience of their hearers. Preaching the remission of sins that are past, they show the law standing in its

sanctity, wedded fast to the unalterable righteousness of God, and give, in that manner, out of the very life and death of Jesus himself, a proof most appalling, that the sins of the future, not forsaken, will meet their just and sure reward.

Having noted these defects, in what is sometimes called the subjective doctrine, we are brought to what I undertook in my discourse at Cambridge to present as the true doctrine.

IV. THE SUBJECTIVE-OBJECTIVE; viz., that which regards the work of Christ as operative wholly on man; but in order to this, with greater effect, as representatively operative on God.

It differs from the objective as rejecting it and discovering, in fact, that no such doctrine is really held by any competent teacher; allowing, however, that such as seem, in using the altar terms of scripture, to hold it, do, after their manner carry something and, if they are not too theoretic, much of the true force of the scripture representations.

It differs from the objective-subjective, in affirming that the supposed subjective influence, or effect on character, is not referrible to an effect wrought in God, by which he is endeared to us, but, when properly investigated, to another subjective effect; that is, to the fact that God has wrought impressions in us, by the life, sufferings, and death of Christ, answerable to the impressions that would be made by the punishment of transgression. It differs, also, from this, in regarding it as the principal object of Christ's mission to operate on character, in the

direct way of communicating God to men, and not merely in the circuitous way of endearment through some supposed effect wrought in God.

It differs from the subjective, as admitting the general and comprehensive truth affirmed in it, that Christ came to reconcile us to God and not God to us; but exposing and supplying two important defects, showing in what manner the terms of the altar may get their true import and have their practical use; and how the release of penalty is accomplished, so as to save the integrity of government and the ends of public justice. Let us now see if this, which is the doctrine of my discourse at Cambridge, can be made intelligible and verified as the Christian doctrine.

It does not seem to have been observed by my orthodox friends, as it very well might have been, that my discourse on the atonement was addressed to a Unitarian audience. Many of the difficulties they find with my doctrine originate, I am quite sure, in this oversight. What I have called the subjective view of the atonement was the only one in which I could hope to find sympathy, or any thing but repugnance in my audience. And accordingly, as I did not wish to part company with them at the beginning, this was presented first. Then the endeavor was, from this as a basis or first truth, commended to their patience and if possible their acceptance, to pass over to the objective view, which contains the substance of our orthodox formula, and carry a realization of that. Hence, in part, the aspect of unreality or fiction of which some have complained. Had I begun at the objective side and presented the whole

subject in a reverse order, they might not have been satisfied, but I think they would have been much less disturbed. Let us try the effect by an experiment.

Christ appears in the world as represented historically in the gospels. His miraculous birth, his life, teachings, miracles, trial, death, resurrection, ascension, all take place in the world of fact and become historic verities. In these facts or verities, we have the whole *matter* of his work. As viewed historically and by human eyes, his work or life-matter is this, neither more nor less. Of course there is nothing in the nature of sacrifice to be spoken of,—in proper historic fact no sacrifice is transacted. There is no priest, no altar, no fire, no confession of sin, no absolution passed, in the scene of the crucifixion. None of the spectators of the death of Christ sees any such transaction, or has any the least suspicion that what he looks upon is any thing different from a judicial murder. It is no more likely to them that his death will be represented as a sacrifice, than that the beheading of John will be; for, taken as in the world of outward *fact*, it is no more a sacrifice than the beheading of John.

But the mind of God beholds a force or meaning in the transaction, which man does not, and which mere human history does not and could not suspect. He beholds a transaction here, that touches the inmost relations of His own being and government to souls, and their relations under sin to Himself. He is prosecuting here, in fact, a great fore-determined plan of redemption,—the justification of sinners and their reconciliation to himself in newness of life.

To give us now the secret force of his plan, or to set us in a condition to receive the grace intended, he takes up the historic matter of Christ's life and death just described, and offers it to us under a form that was not in the facts themselves, taken simply as facts; a form which, asserted historically, would even be untrue; but which, taken as representing a certain mysterious interior force in the facts, is profoundly true and real. He calls the death of Christ a *sacrifice*, an *offering*, a *propitiation*; declares the *remission of sins in his blood*; represents him as *bearing the sins of mankind* in a way of vicarious substitution; calls him the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*. And then he invites us to come and exercise faith in him, as being all these, and so a complete salvation.

Now the question is, wherein lies the truth of this altar-view of the Savior's death and what does it mean? And the answer is, first of all, that it is not, by the supposition, a properly historic truth or truth of *fact*; for, in that sense, there was no sacrifice. Christ was not offered, according to the human view, as a sacrifice. He was offered as a sacrifice, only in some such representative, tropical, or mystic sense, as God alone could discern the truth of; a sense affixed or ascribed, but not in the historic form of the facts.

Asking still in what sense a sacrifice, we discover next that he is in no such sense a sacrifice that he can not, as well and as truly, be called a high priest and a mercy-seat (mistranslated in the word "*propitiation*," Rom. iii., 25) and a vail of the temple, at the same time. And here it is clear again, that taken as a spiritual sacrifice,

he must not be so imprisoned by the figure, that the other figures can not be applied, with a spiritual significance, as freely as this.

Thus far we go without obstruction ; but the question still remains, what is the true interior meaning of the altar forms or figures above named, as applied to the Savior's death ? Obviously we can find no answer to the inquiry, except as we fall back upon these forms of the ancient ritual service, and take our gauge of them, according to the meanings and associations in which they are there invested.

This now I will do ; only, to avoid confusion, I will select a single one of these altar terms and gather my illustrations round that by itself. I take the figure of *propitiation*. Thus, God is declared to have sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In what sense a propitiation ? In such a sense, I answer, as a Hebrew, accustomed to offer his propitiatory sacrifice for sin, would find in the figure, taken as a figure ; such a sense, in other words, as the force of the analogy would carry. What then is the feeling or thought he has, when he comes to offer his propitiatory sacrifice upon the altar ? Comprehensively, it is this ; that he is here to propitiate God. His soul is burdened by his sin. God is angry. He wants peace. He comes therefore with his offering, to propitiate or reconcile God, and obtain absolution or the remission of his sins.

Tell him, then, that Christ is offered once for all, as a propitiation for sin ; call upon him to come and believe in Christ as being a sufficient and everlasting propitiation ; and he will conceive, accepting the form of his

thought as being the truth itself, that Christ is said to have propitiated God, or made him propitious to sinners; turned away God's wrath; pacified him; or perhaps reconciled him.

This, taken as speculative theologic doctrine, would be what I have called the objective view. It calls upon a lost world to come and rest their salvation upon the sacrifice of Jesus; declaring that he has smoothed away the righteous anger of God, brought in peace and pardon, and provided a free justification for us, by satisfying, in our stead, the righteous demands of God against us.

But we go back now, once more, to the Hebrew at his sacrifice and finding him engaged, as we just saw, to propitiate God, we venture to ask him whether, after all, it is God that wants propitiating, or himself that wants reconciling to God? If he be a man of the earlier ages under the ritual, he is likely not to understand the question. But if he be a worshiper of the later times, the time, for example, of David and the prophets, when the reflective habit is a little more unfolded, and piety is growing more subjective, he will begin to revolve the question internally, and will finally reply that he finds the need of a sacrifice in himself, and the wants of his own character as a sinner, and not in God. He will also bring into view the fact that God is unchangeable. 'No, I do not suppose,' he will answer, 'that God wants propitiating so much as I want changing in my spirit; for our David acknowledges in his hymns that God is "not hungry" for "the flesh of bulls and goats," but calls rather for the "thanksgivings" of the heart and the

fulfillment of our "vows to the Most High." God also bade our prophet Isaiah tell us that the multitude of sacrifices is to no purpose, unless we cleanse our lives; that he is "full of burnt offerings and the fat of fed beasts"—"bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me." And he said, in like manner, to our prophet Amos, "I hate, I despise your feast days; though ye offer me burnt offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Yes, one thing is clear, he will say on deliberation, 'that no offering propitiates God, unless the heart goes with the offering and ascends to God in the smoke of it.' And when he has come to this, he will begin, most certainly, to inquire whether it be not, after all, the very object of the offering or sacrifice, to work a change in his own spiritual dispositions, and bring him thus into a new state of penitence and peace with God. And the moment such a thought occurs to him, or dawns upon his understanding, and he begins to see the objective form of the rite as related to his subjective exercise, it will be as if he were just coming to a distinct apprehension of its nature and value. Solemnly enjoined upon the nation by God, as the condition of the forgiveness of sins, he will see that the observance is a most impressive public acknowledgment of God, admirably fitted to produce and perpetuate, in the bosom of the whole nation, the profoundest convictions of the sanctity of God's law, and of spiritual obligation to his government. Or, adverting to what is more immediately personal to himself, he will see that in this rite of sacrifice—a rite

of expense, an offering too of blood or the life, which is sacred, to God—he consecrates, in his own feeling, the violated law before which he comes to be absolved; awakens in himself a sense of sin correspondently vivid, coupled with a want of forgiveness equally pressing; and that, so, when he comes with his offering to propitiate God, he becomes, if he is sincere, and by aid of his exercise, a different man. The reality of the propitiation consists in the fact that he is brought into a real and true peace with God. It is not that he is made perfect as a comer thereunto, by observing it as a mere ceremony; but if he is in it in faith, as an exercise and help to faith, it will carry results of a more inward quality—a spiritual absolution, a state of spiritual peace and reconciliation with God. The objective propitiation will be executed by a state of inward conformity, love, and confidence.

This then is the real force of the old rite of sacrifice. If now it be declared, once more, that God hath sent his Son to be a propitiation for the sins of the world, it will be found, in like manner, that while the form of the thought is objective, the real change is subjective—not a change in God, but a change rather in the sinner himself; so that when he comes to hang himself in faith upon Christ as his altar of peace, trusting in his blood for the remission of sins, the faith he exercises, uniting him, as it will, to the person and the spirit of his Savior, will be found to have carried a total subjective change and renovation of his life; and the peace he looked for will come through a reconciliation of his own disobedient and evil nature to God. And thus it will be

evident that the declaration of Christ, as a propitiation for the sins of the world, is one, at the root, with the declaration that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself—all the altar texts one, at the root, with that most specific declaration, which affirms that God hath sent his Son to bless every one of us, by turning us away from his iniquities. In a word, the objective view, that which looks to the propitiating of God to sinners, is seen to be one and the same, when sounded to the bottom, with the subjective, that looks to the reconciling of sinners to God.

I say 'one and the same.' They are different in form, different in power, and fulfill different uses; and yet they issue at the same point where they get their practical meaning and verity, viz., in the subjective renovation of the sinner. If we look upon Christ in the simple historic aspect of his life, the Divine Word incarnate; living thus in the flesh as an historic manifestation of God; teaching, doing mighty works, and suffering, to communicate God and his character to men; there is undoubtedly produced in us, by these facts, an inferior and so far different impression from that which is produced, when the interior sense, or mystical power, of these facts, is embodied and offered to our faith in the forms of the altar. When God represents the history under these altar forms, an impression is made that is both impossible and inconceivable under any other; an impression that transcends the mere speculative understanding and the natural symbols of language; and yet such as to meet all the secret relations of a soul, under sin, to God's mysterious rule and the transcendent

methods and counsels of his government, as the eternal king of the universe.

Still the grand issue is the same, whichever of the two conceptions of propitiation we take, the representatively objective, or the subjective; that which looks to a pacification of God, or that which contemplates a change in us. And it is sufficiently accurate to say that the former, representatively taken, is the latter. It is not said, as in the theologically objective view just described and discarded, that God is, literally speaking, appeased by an effect wrought in him, which must (as in the objective-subjective view) bring a great renovating power to act upon our character; but it is said that every thing is done directly for our renovation, and to set us in union with God; to accomplish which, with the greatest certainty and effect, and to bring us into the fittest and most transcendent relationship of peace with his holy government, it is necessary that Christ, or the given historic matter of his life and death, should be set before us in the objective mystic forms of the altar—an offering, a sacrifice rendered up to God, a propitiation for our sins. Also that the altar service was ordained by God's special appointment, in part, to be a shadow or type, in this manner, of the good things to come; that is, to furnish a form of art, or a mystic terminology, for the realizing, in us, of impressions and a character, exactly meeting the transcendent relations of a finite transgressor to an infinite being and government—impressions, it will be seen, that none but mystic symbols, or such as transcend our speculative understanding, can fitly and sufficiently realize.

But where is the reality then, it may be asked, of this representatively objective view? What solidity has it? What is it but a figment having no real substance or value?

Precisely contrary to this, it is far more efficient and more powerfully true and closer to our wants, than the other. The most impotent, unreal, and inefficacious of all forms of thought, are commonly the subjective. We are never inspired and kindled by any but objective views of things, such as carry us clear of ourselves and of all self-inspection; and it even seems probable that, in a perfect state of being, where every creature is to be elevated by a full inspiration of life and strength from God, all thought and all truth will take the objective vital form, as being most efficient, closest to nature, and most really true.

Is it a mere fiction or unreality, when I say, objectively, "it is dark," instead of saying, subjectively, "I am dark," for this is the real fact,—“it is cold,” instead of “I am cold,”—“it is sweet,” instead of “I have a sense of sweetness,”—or that “death is our enemy,” instead of “we dislike and dread our own act of dying,”—or that “time is swift,” instead of “our internal states and successions transpire rapidly,”—or that “a certain place is dangerous,” instead of “we shall be apprehensive and, perhaps, receive actual detriment in the place”? Language is full of these objective forms of thought, which, though in one view they have no reality, are yet, in another and more practical, the most profoundly real of all. If we had none but subjective language, we should even die of inanity. No truth, we may almost

say, is perfectly represented till it has found some objective form.

Let us return, a moment now, to the objective altar-form of propitiation, and try the reality of that representation, by comparison with another, which is familiar to us all. We speak of *prevailing in prayer*; a phrase, it will be observed, that corresponds almost exactly, as regards the form of the thought, with *propitiation*. The Hebrew came, with his offering, to render it up to God and thus to propitiate God, or move him to be propitious. We go to God in prayer to prevail with him; that is, by our requests and importunities, to turn him, or render him so propitious as to give us the particular blessing we ask. The offering of the victim and the offering of the prayer are both by divine ordinance or appointment, and one as truly as the other; and the form of the thought, viz., to propitiate or attract the favor of God, is nearly identical in both.

But the form of the thought in prayer, proposing thus to prevail with God,—wherein lies its truth? Prayer does not inform God of any thing, which he did not know before. It does not make the object prayed for any better than it was, or worthier of his attention. It does not make God any better disposed than he was, or more gracious; indeed he is immutable. And yet there are gifts bestowed, that otherwise would not have been bestowed; the suppliant prevails, or may, in his request. How? on what principle? Simply on the ground that he has been brought into such a state, by a subjective change realized in himself, through or by means of his exercise in the prayer, that his request may *therefore* be

granted. He has informed God of nothing, made him no better, made his object no worthier of God; but he has had such an exercise himself as God designed to give him, and has come into such a state as God proposed to secure, when he instituted the economy of prayer; therefore his prayer is granted. In form of thought, he has been trying to prevail with God, and he says that he has prevailed; and yet the precise point, where the success of his prayer hinged, was on the subjective change or prevailing realized in himself.

Neither let it be conceived that this is the same with that half infidel view, which justifies prayer only on the ground that it is a good self-magnetizing exercise. As far from that as possible. On the contrary, it regards prayer even as a cause among causes, and thinks it just as absurd that the particular cause, prayer, should be followed by nothing as an effect, as that other causes should be. It no more involves a change in God, than the effects wrought by other causes; for it is a part of God's immutability that all causes shall be followed by effects which, to his infinite wisdom, are appropriate. And without the causes they will not follow.

At the same time, it must be understood that God institutes prayer, not for the improvement of himself or his government, but to benefit the suppliant and perfect the unity of his kingdom. The design of it is to draw the suppliant closer to himself, teach him how to believe or exercise faith, how to find acquaintance with God and make realizations of God, by a method more immediate than by any instruction at second hand; so to confirm the soul of the suppliant, in every thing good and pleasing to

himself. It is also meant to teach him how to love the objects prayed for, to enlarge and encourage that love. It is also a plan, by which God weaves the good of all nations and possibly of all ages together, first in love, then in ties of mutual benefaction, as their prayers have called down blessings upon others, who were friends or enemies, neighbors or strangers in distant climes. These, we may believe, are God's objects in the spiritual economy of prayer, and the suppliants prevail just accordingly as they prevail with themselves, or come into those states which God proposed to encourage and perfect, by means of the ordinance of prayer. These are the causes, the answers the effects.

Then it is a mere fiction, one may say, to speak of prevailing with God at all. Since we do not make him otherwise disposed, but only become otherwise disposed ourselves, we only prevail with ourselves. I answer in reply, that although success in prayer hinges principally on exercises and results wrought in the suppliant himself, and not on the turning of God, there is yet, by the supposition, such a thing as success. Blessings, otherwise withheld, are yielded to the requests made, on conditions that are fulfilled in the suppliant; and so he does prevail as truly and really as if he changed the mind of God. And so, when we speak of propitiating God, the subjective impressions and dispositions wrought in the sacrificer, or the disciple, are themselves the ground or condition of peace and divine manifestations in the soul, otherwise not yielded. God is really become propitious, only not by effects wrought in himself, but in his worshiper. Nor is it any mere fiction, when God is thus

said to be prevailed with or propitiated, but a most real truth; for it serves the real and true uses of the mind. Thus, if it better serves the true uses of life to say "it is dark," instead of saying "I am dark;" or to speak of time or death as objectively existing, when in fact they are only subjective, then such forms of speech, though not literally true *as forms*, are yet the best instruments of true uses, which is the only test of truth.

Besides there is an immense practical advantage, in the objective form, as you may easily discover. For suppose it were required of us to speak, not of prevailing with God in prayer, because that is a fiction, but of prevailing rather with ourselves. The suppliant coming now before God, with his mind introverted, and having it as the form of his thought to prevail with himself, that is, to draw himself into the very states of desire, dependence, purity and love, which God meant to secure by the ordinance of prayer,—occupied in this mere subjective way, he will, for that reason, accomplish nothing; unless it be to annihilate all simplicity in his feeling, turn his prayers into reflective and self-culturing efforts, and blend so many artificial thoughts with his exercise, that he will scarcely know whether he prays or not. And so, if we insist that no man shall pray as if to prevail with God, but only as if to prevail with himself, prayer will sink, at once, into the worst abortion and poorest lie conceivable. The form of thought, in the exercise, must be outward, the draft of the mind must be objective—toward God, to prevail with God, simple, unreflective, inartificial,—and then the soul of the suppliant will itself be harnessed into that precise state of want, love and devo-

tion which is requisite, and is, in fact, the real matter to be prevailed in. What, then, do we conclude, but that speaking of prevailing with God, holding that objective form of thought, is accepting no fiction or unreality, but the most real and solid rather of all representations, because it is the only one that serves the real and true uses of the soul.

Just so must we look upon the propitiatory offering of the Hebrew worshiper. He comes to propitiate God, and that, exactly, is the form of thought that will best assist him in coming into the subjective state of reconciliation which is necessary, to find God propitious and to be established in peace with him. Which being true, this form of thought is no unreality or fiction; for it is that alone, by or through which the man will come into the state of peace with God which he is after. Since the subjective change of reconciliation to God can no way be effected so well as to have the worshiper, in his offering, trying, in humble sorrow and contrition, to propitiate God, what farther proof is needed of the solid and practical verity of such a form of thought? Even though God is not to be propitiated by a change in Himself, the form of thought, taken as a *type of action* for the soul, is still more true than any other; just as it is more true to say that the "sun rises," when it does not, than to say, "we are rolled up into the view of the sun,"—because it better meets the practical uses of life.

The same is to be said when speaking of Christ as a propitiation for sin, and of all the kindred forms and figures of the altar. If the matter is to reconcile us or renew us in love, and not to reconcile God by a change

in him, still there is a most solid reality in these altar-forms. Taken as objective to faith, they set us in just that attitude in which the reconciling power of Christ will be most efficacious; just as we pray most effectually, when our thought is to prevail with God, and not when we think only of prevailing with ourselves.

And here, precisely, is the truly divine art of the gospel plan. The Unitarian can not believe it. Christ, he affirms, most truly, has come to reconcile us to God. Then he concludes, most falsely, that propitiation and all such Jewish figures as speak of reconciling God to us only obscure the truth. Let them be dismissed. And now there is nothing left him for a gospel, but to fall to being reconciled to God, or propitiated subjectively toward him, which is about the same kind of operation, as regards success, that it would be if one were to think only, in prayer, of prevailing with himself!

Meantime the speculative orthodox, those I mean who really hold, or think they hold the first and second of the four views, above stated, take up the objective forms of the altar and begin to theorize upon them and build them into what they call a scheme of atonement. Just as one might take up the expression, "the sun rises," and work it logically out into a Ptolemaic system of astronomy, (when of course it becomes untrue,) so it is shown to the school, by the most certain logic, how God, as the governor of the world, could not let go the just penalties of sin without being propitiated, first, by some effect wrought in himself. All the grand, life-giving objectivities of the altar undergo a like theologic transformation, every one to be emptied of its value; and then, ceasing

to be a symbol for the support of faith and a contrite spirit, to become, instead, not seldom, a stumbling-block to reason and a hindrance even to the peace of the soul.

Avoiding both errors, the true evangelism goes to Christ, in perfect simplicity, to believe in him as the propitiation, the sin offering, the expiatory sacrifice, the blood of remission ; taking these objective forms according to their most natural power and expression, to hang itself on them as the altar of peace and forgiveness. Self is forgotten. God is embraced as another name for peace. And the soul, breathing out her contrition by the altar against which her faith is leaning, feels a change transpire within. She is free. In the name of Christ she lives.

Do I then say that these objective altar-forms are more affecting than the proper history itself of Christ's life and person, more moving than the garden, more subduing than the cross? By no means. They are not to be viewed in contrast, or as raising a contrast between them, but in unity,—the outward history as having its inward force and import revealed or impressed in the terms of the altar. These latter have, in fact, a double value, taken as complementary to the other. First, they bring out the high transcendent relations and the secret spiritual meaning of the history ; and secondly, they set us in a position of mental objectivity, where the garden and the cross can better exert their power, than if we were looking to be moved or penetrated by them ; the position, viz. of simple, unreflective, out-going trust, where no thought turns to look after itself, but the whole being occupied with trust, becomes unconscious to the change going on.

in itself and therefore more completely open to the power, by which that change is wrought; more facile, as respects the relations to God and his government, into which it is to be inserted.

Thus far my illustration has been hung upon the single term *propitiation*. I selected this, because it is the one most boldly objective and would therefore assist me to make the exposition more distinct than any other. But the same process will resolve all the kindred terms of the altar-service—'offering,' 'sacrifice,' 'blood,' 'sprinkling,' 'atonement,' 'ransom,' 'remission,' 'reconciliation.' These all hang upon the altar and are used to signify some particular reference, or complexion of thought, connected with the rites of the altar. The victim as presented to God, is an *offering*. As consecrated to him and lost to the owner, it is a *sacrifice*. Looked upon as a holy or sacred substance in the offering, it is the *blood*, which is the *life*, and so the *sprinkling* of consecration. Considered as making amends for sin to the law, it is *atonement*, in the sense of *expiation*; a word not used in the scripture. Regarded as conciliating God, it is *propitiation*. As the procuring cause of release, it is *ransom*. As issuing in release itself, it is *remission*. And, as resulting thus in mutual peace between God and the worshiper, it is *reconciliation*. These terms, all lying about the same center, and separated by no absolutely definite lines, are clothed of course in common associations, and, to the same extent, run together in their signification. Indeed they are many of them one and the same word in the original Hebrew, which, passing into the Greek of the

Septuagint and the New Testament, and through these into the English translation, is represented finally by so many different words. This original Hebrew word signifies, literally, to *cover*; the radical idea being that one who comes to offer a victim, comes to cover his sin.

If now we take the word *atonement* in the sense of expiation, and put it through the same process that we have traced in the word *propitiation*, we bring it to the same result. The Hebrew worshiper comes to expiate, or atone, or make amends for, his sins. As in propitiation his thought was objectively occupied with propitiating God, so here it is objectively occupied with giving him that compensation that will make him propitious—expiating the sin that angers him. If now you ask him whether he really supposes, that offering his animal makes amends for his sins, your question may perplex him, and, if he is a rude man, little exercised in tracing distinctions, he may feel obliged to say that it does. And yet, if you press him with the absurdity of supposing that God has any use to make of the blood of bulls and goats, such that he is willing to accept his victim in commutation for his sins, he is likely to say—‘yes, but there must be some right meaning in my transaction, whether I can understand it or not, and, as God requires it, I will do as he commands. Of this I am consciously certain, at the least, that I consent, in my sacrifice, to the law I have broken by my transgressions, that I feel how good and holy it is, and that my sacrifice helps me feel it. The law is never so sacred in its authority; I never feel its obligation so much as when I come, in this expensive

way, to make amends for the violation I have done it. And when my remission is pronounced, and I go home to my tribe again, I go under an impression of the sacred authority of my obligations to God greatly strengthened by what I have done,—strengthened even more than they would be if God stood upon his rigor, and would not forgive.’

Now in this you perceive, that while his form of thought is objective, proposing to expiate or make amends for his sin, the real effect he describes is subjective; viz. that he has come under a higher impression of the sanctity of the law he has violated and a new purpose of obedience to it. We ourselves speak in the same manner, when, having offended another, we say that we will go and make ‘reparation,’ or go and ‘redress’ the injury. It may not be that we restore the amount of our injury; for the injury may be of a kind that allows no recompense or restitution. We only mean that we will go and put him in the right and ourselves in the wrong; which is all the case admits.

Accordingly, when this figure of atonement, or expiatory sacrifice, passes into the New Testament and is there applied to Christ, we are to understand, that while, in form of thought, he expiates our sin before God by his sufferings and death, the real force of the transaction, thus objectively stated, is that he produces in us and the world of mankind an impression that God is right, and sin is wrong, and the law holy, and obedience just, that will as much fortify the public authority of God, as if he had stood inflexibly for punishment and, by no such expiation, sought to release it. Then, having this impres-

sion secured, it may well be released or remitted;—only it will be needful, on our part, that we embrace, in faith and a spirit of true repentance, such as would gladly make amends for the injury it has done, the sacrifice that has been offered.

But *remission* again is another of the terms on our list. And this too the Hebrew worshiper holds in a form of thought wholly objective. It is an absolution promised on the part of God and pronounced by the priest. Ask him now what effect or value this formal remission can have? Perhaps it never occurred to him, before, that his sin is a law of bad causation, a law of sin and death in his soul. And, if so, he is likely to be perplexed again, even worse than before. But he will gather up himself, at last, and say, 'God promised to give me remission, and clear me of my sin, and since he is faithful I will trust him to make it, somehow, a reality in me. Nay more, I found as I went away from the sacrifice, that I was not under the power of sin as before; I had a better conscience, a freer spirit of obedience, a new desire after God and purity of life. Therefore I believe that my sin is somehow broken in its power, and that what I experience within answers to the remission I sought.'

And so, again, of the remission offered in Jesus Christ. Objective, in form of thought, it has its reality in an internal absolution from the law of sin; a regeneration of the spirit in duty, love and purity. There is, therefore, now no condemnation; for the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Thus far, we have been seeing how the objective terms of the altar have their reality and verity, in subjective effects, wrought in the worshipers; which effects are wrought only the more certainly, by means of the simplicity of the objective representations employed. At the same time, it is remarkable, a fact which I do not recollect to have seen mentioned, that the ritual itself was still so arranged as to lead the thoughtful mind almost certainly to a consideration of subjective effects accomplished or to be accomplished in the ritual service. This is done by means of what is said of sacrifices, atonements, sprinklings, and the like, as connected with *cleansing*, or a state of *cleanness*. Thus it is declared—"For on that day, shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." And in this word *clean*, even if we say that it means ceremonially clean, the mind is still carried along, by a kind of necessary implication, in a line of subjective thought, parallel to the objectivities of the altar, and made to note effects of spiritual cleansing wrought in itself, answering, as equivalents, to the outward cleansing of the altar. In a more reflective age of the world, this kind of exercise would have been more conspicuously manifest; and yet it is sufficiently so. For so closely was the idea of purification, purgation, cleansing, associated with sacrifice or atonement, that the word *cover*, translated variously, as we have seen, but more commonly, *atonement*, is used again and again to signify *purification*. (Exod. xxix. 36; xxx. 10; Numb. xxxv. 33; 1 Sam. iii. 14; Ezek. xliii. 20 and 26; Isaiah vi. 7.) Thus, in the last case for example, the word

cover, [atone,] is applied directly as denoting a subjective purification of character,—“So this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is *purged*.”

If now we ask how, or by what law of use, the word *cover* [atone, expiate,] was transformed in meaning, so as to signify a cleansing effect, purely spiritual and subjective; the answer must be that in all its uses, however objective, it was so closely associated with a subjective change or purification, that from one meaning it naturally slid into the other. Or if it be true, as a writer in the Princeton Essays, (Vol. II. p. 54,) affirms, that the original meaning of the word translated *atone*, is not to *cover*, but to *cleanse*, or *purify*; then, we only see how the whole scheme of the altar was connected, at the root, and by the closest possible associations, with the notion of a subjective power. Besides it is remarkable, however this may be, that notwithstanding the specially unreflective, outgoing habit of the Hebrews, we discover a tendency in them, so early developed, to find some spiritually subjective sense, in all their most objective and even fleshly rites. Thus it was that circumcision, associated with the idea of cleanness, slid into a spiritual application. “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God.”

Having discovered, in this manner, how the objective forms of the ancient ritual had their meaning and value in subjective results or effects, we are ready, with double evidence, to go into the New Testament and show that all which is said of Christ as a sacrifice, and of his blood

as connected with the remission of sins, is to be understood, in what I have called the subjective-objective method.

And, indeed, we can see this fact standing out, even to our eye, in the very language employed concerning his sacrifice. First, in the fact that both kinds of terms are applied to Christ; who is represented, here, as having offered himself to God; and, here, as having come to reconcile us unto God. Secondly, in the fact that so many representations, derived from the sacrifice of the altar and applied to him, are yet applied in a way to show that there is a subjective reference in them to our purification; as when it is written—"Who loved the church and gave himself for it, [language of sacrifice,] that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word"—"that washed us from our sins in his blood"—"have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"—"who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people"—"when he had himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Or, to give two passages that present the subjective-objective view, both of the Old Testament sacrifice and the spiritual sacrifice of Christ together:—"For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience"—"And almost all things are, by the law, purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission; it was therefore necessary that the patterns of heavenly things [the Mo-

saic] should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves [the Christian] with better sacrifices than these." In all this language, you perceive how closely the ritual sacrifices are associated, in the Hebrew mind, with the idea of a subjective lustral effect—no matter whether it be the "purifying of the flesh" or the spirit; for even when they spoke and formally thought only of purifying the flesh, there was yet associated, more or less consciously, the sense of some lustral effect upon the sins of the soul. And then the Christian doctrine follows, representing Christ as the atoning sacrifice that is to wash, or purge, or purify, the souls under sin.

As, in my discourse at Cambridge, I discarded the common idea that the death of Christ was required to fortify the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of sin before other worlds, it may comfort the disturbed feeling of some, if I add that the institution of priesthood and sacrifice does appear, in certain intimations of scripture, to be a transcendental and, possibly, in some qualified sense, a universal institution. Undoubtedly Christ is Word of the Father before all worlds; and, in that sense, a medium of knowledge and approach to the Father. And as the principal idea of the priestly office is, that the priest is medium, or mediator, between souls and God; the Word is thus the Eternal Priest of the universe—a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek; making eternal intercession [eternally intervening or coming between] for us and all created minds. So he is figured, standing before the Father, as the unseen spiritual Majesty, to open the way and be, as it were, their

advocate, to bring them near. In this view, he will manage for all according to their state and necessity ; for the sinless and pure, if such there be, as sinless ; for sinners as sinners ; though by us, under sin, the office of the *priest* is commonly supposed to be inherently related to sin ; because, in our case, it practically is and must be. But according to the more general conception, just suggested, the institution of a priesthood (including sacrifice where sacrifice is wanted) has its transcendental ground in the nature of God ; that is in the Word, as the form, or visible glory of the Father. And this, perhaps, is what is hinted to us in the "unchangeable priesthood ;" "the example and shadow of heavenly things ;" "the patterns of things seen in the heavens," or "in the mount ;" "the high priest, who is a minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." It is not meant, of course, that outward sacrifices are offered in the heavenly places ; but only that these taken as outward, in connection with the outward priesthood, are good as images ; bases of words ; correspondences, the Swedenborgians would say ; types, our fathers have said ; or, better still than either, *patterns, shadows of good things to come*, as the scriptures themselves declare. My own conviction is that the institution of the altar, useful of course to them that worship in its ritual, was principally designed to prepare impressions and terms of language for "the good things to come," the "heavenly things themselves, sometime to be manifested, in the transcendent mystery of Christ, the Word made flesh. They are patterns in the world of sense, artificially prepared, to represent and express the otherwise inconceiv-

able and supernatural work of Christ in the earth. Their connection with Christ is not accidental, but, in some sense, even before all worlds. They are copies of a transcendent something in the heavens, or the Word of the heavens; to be as letter to spirit, and to be fulfilled in due time by the heavenly things themselves, brought down to earth, in the incarnation of the Word.

Holding this conception of the universal priesthood of Christ, and of the altar service as related to its appropriate manifestation among the sinners of mankind, we get, perhaps, the true meaning of Christ, when he says—"other sheep I have, that are not of this fold;" and of Paul, when he says, "that he might reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven,"—"that, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together, in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth,"—"far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come,"—"and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." In this language it may be conceded that we have the large view set forth of Christ's universal and eternal priesthood; in which he becomes, in literal fact, head over all things to the church, and the church a body commensurate with the universal kingdom of God, "the fullness of him that filleth all in all;" language that can hardly be applied to the fragmentary, feeble body, called the church, in this world.

I have referred to this transcendent view of Christ

and his priesthood, simply to show you that, while I discard the idea that his sacrifice, here, is made for effect in other worlds, and not specially on us, I am as far as possible from admitting that low and shallow conceit which supposes that sacrifices were human inventions, and that when the language of sacrifice is applied to Christ, it is merely an accidental and casual application of figures, that might as well not have been used, and ought, in reason, to be dispensed with. It is only a part of the same view that Christ is an accident, and that redemption is no real plan of God in the earth; prepared by no shadows, in the past, that connect with good things to come, in the future. Contrary to this, I am readier to believe that the beginning connects with the end, and the end with the beginning, and that, back of all, the sublime superstructure rests on a foundation wholly transcendent in the divine nature itself,—the essential, eternal, universal, priesthood of the Word.

Accordingly, these altar terms, which I have been trying to explain, are to be regarded as being essentially sacred preparations. They are the Eternal and True Form of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore must neither be explained away, nor resolved into any speculative formula, that shall be virtually substituted for them. No such formula is possible, that is better than a remote and scarcely significant approximation. We must receive them all, objective and subjective, as they stand in the scripture, and use them as an inward ritual, designed to work in the heart their own transcendent, life-giving impressions. No man thinks it possible to give the import of the ritual, in the Episcopal or Romish service,

in a simple theoretic formula. As little can we invent any article or formula that will give us a Christ, in the terms of abstraction or logical system. If God was obliged to incarnate his Son, and pass him through a life and death, and prepare, by long ages of history, an artificial and divine terminology to embody and represent the grace of his priesthood, we certainly can not so far outdo him, as to put forth a true Christ, in a single sentence of theory.

There may be some one or two truths, concerning him, which it is well enough to adopt as formulas of confession; only provided it be understood how remote and partial they are—dull caricatures only of his great work; finger-points only of reference; lines that represent him only as the lines of some table of contents may represent the poem that follows, in the book. And a man might as well feast himself on the table of contents prefixed to an epic or a tragedy, as to preach any formula, as being the true substance and equivalent of the work of Christ. We must let the gospel have its own terminology—offering, sacrifice, atonement, propitiation, lamb, blood, remission, cleansing; answered, all, by the naturally descriptive words of fact and history—Truth, Love, Sorrow, the manger, the garden, the cross, the kingdom.

But I have said nothing, as yet, of the particular doctrine of justification; save that there is such a doctrine, which is necessary to be maintained, and that, whatever view of it may be asserted, the grounds of the supposed justification will be resolvable, in the last

degree, into subjective impressions of the sanctity of the law and the righteousness of God, produced in us by the life and passion of Christ. The doctrine of Christ, prepared in the terms of the altar service, has no strictly historic connection with the doctrine of Christ, asserted under the form of justification. The two doctrines, distinct in form and the historic origin of their symbols, are only *coincident* in their general substance. One is priestly in its form and origin, the other stands in symbols derived from law and governmental order, and is more nearly political and speculative in its form. One is the doctrine of Christ under patterns seen in the mount. The other is the same doctrine set in forms generated, more directly, by human thought and inquiry under human law.

The particular question of justification appears to have originated, as a speculative question, in the Jewish schools. Thus, when Christ came, he found the Sadducees, the Unitarians of the day, and the Pharisees, who stood for Mosaic orthodoxy, debating the question: on what ground shall a man be accepted, what is it that makes a man just, or justifies him, before God? A genuine, proper question, that every human being must encounter; only not always, perhaps, in the politico-speculative form of the issue here stated. The Sadducees maintained that a man is justified simply on the ground of being just in fact; that is, making to himself a just and right character. The Pharisees, that a man is justified, because of his keeping exactly all the commandments and ritual appointments, or fulfilling the letter of the Mosaic law. Christ meets the question as

he finds it, and, since it is a question of so great import, proposes the true answer. This appears to be his aim in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican; the latter of whom he represents as a sinner, smiting on his breast and crying, 'God be merciful,' and so going down to his house '*justified*.' Taking sides with neither party, he propounds indeed, at the very beginning of his ministry, a doctrine that rejects the opposing tenets of both; declaring that God has sent his Son into the world, not to condemn, but to save the world—"He that believeth on him is not condemned"—or, what is the same, is justified. This he said in immediate connection with his discourse on regeneration, which he had just closed by saying that the Son is to be lifted up for healing or spiritual transformation; so that whosoever looks to him and believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The doctrine then is that faith in him is to regenerate, or to be a subjectively regenerated life; and so is to subjectively justify, or remove condemnation. Let us see if we can trace the method.

God, as governor of the world, presides in justice, connecting evil with transgression; vindicating thus his own character, the integrity of his governmental order, and the sanctity of his law. How then can he acquit or justify the transgressor? How, in the incarnate mission of Jesus Christ, has he done it?

Here we are met, on either hand, by two distinct schools, supposed to be even more radically opposite to each other than the Pharisees and the Sadducees, who yet agree in the common opinion, that whatever justice

requires, God must somehow execute ; and that, since every punishment threatened, or laid by God in the way of transgression, is just, punishment must have its way and can not be stayed, without a breach of God's honor and the essential justice of his law.

Thus, on one side, or in the school of extreme speculative orthodoxy, represented by such writers as Mr. Symington, it is held that, in order to relieve us of the just penalty of transgression, God's justice must be executed and satisfied in some other way ; which is done by Christ accepting and bearing the penalty in his own person, our sins being imputed to him and assumed by him for this object.

On the other, in the school of modern Unitarianism, it is held that God can not deliver us of the just penalty of our sins at all ; that we must bear it in the full and exact measure of justice, and that our only hope is to wear a passage through and get our deliverance, by the patient process of exhaustion. The argument is, that as God is just, his character requires him to do justice ; that he is immutable and can not reverse his decreed penalties ; and especially that we are all under the penalty of justice now, in as far as we transgress ; the penalty being executed in us by a necessary law of nature, which, as God can not change it without a miracle, must pour its currents upon us, till we become good enough to go clear, under the same retributive law of cause and effect, which grates in misery and bondage on our bad experience. There is no possibility of a sudden remission, apprehended by faith and sealed by a new spiritual birth. We must begin to grow better, by a regular process of culture and

amendment, and we must go on till we run out the flow of penal consequence and get the laws of retribution on our side. If a man is dying, at the end of a criminal, ungodly life, there is no hope for him, save that, in the moment that remains between the lightning and the thunder, he may possibly work a little merely incipient improvement in his character. And then, dying under the terms of justice, these terms will keep him company, as the only comfort of his passage and his only hope beyond.

The former doctrine I reject, because of the necessary insignificance of any scheme, which represents God as executing penalties on himself and realizing public retribution for sin, by transactions within the circle of his own divinity; also because, if it could be significant, if we could either undeify Christ, or throw the penal burdens of justice upon his humanity, taken separately from his divinity, the willingness of God to accept the woes of innocence, instead of the woes of guilt, would only indicate the confusion or loss of all moral distinctions—a readiness to be satisfied with the stipulated quantum of woe, and let justice perish by a double sacrifice; first by releasing the pains of guilt, and again by receiving the pains of holiness.

The other doctrine I reject, first, because, in taking away God's freedom to any virtue but justice, it takes away the virtue also of that; reducing Him to a Nemesis, against whose fated and repulsive rigors all our warmest conceptions of the divine beauty raise themselves in a mutiny of unbelief; so that if we say we believe, we shall only be found to have let down the precept of the law,

just enough to accommodate our faith in the forbidding rigors of the penalty,—just enough to save God's paternity by the laxity of his principles, after it has been lost by the judicial sternness of his retributions. Secondly, because it wholly displaces the gospel, as a message of good news from heaven; denying even the possibility of pardon or remission, in any sense that gives it an effective value. Nothing can be said of pardon, save that it signifies a forgiving feeling in God to the penitent. It is that feeling, nothing more. He is under bonds to justice not to bless himself, in executing the pardon or making it effectual to the sinner, by any intervention that disturbs the penal currents of retribution.

It is certainly remarkable, that a scheme which delights in maintaining the paternity of God, as its eminent distinction, should yet resolve itself into a mere Law of Retribution; a law so inexpiable and unmitigable, that God's pardons are as much restricted by it as the wickedness of men. I see not why the paternity of falling bodies might not be affirmed, with as much reason, and as good an appearance of gospel lenity. Only now and then, however, is this doctrine set forth in its naked rigor and carried fully out to its limit, as, with sublime fidelity to logical consequence, it is done by Dr. Dewey, in his very nearly shocking discourse on "Retribution." Probably it is not apprehended, by many Unitarians, as being a necessary part or condition of their system. And yet I have never been able to see how, in rigorous construction, they have room for any thing else. Excluding justification by faith, this law of retribution seems, in fact, to be their gospel.

Rejecting, in this manner, the fundamental assumption that, in order to be just, God must execute the penalties of justice, whether on Christ or on men, I take the ground that Christianity is a plan by which God proposes to justify the guilty, without any proper execution of penalty at all. I take the same ground here with Dr. Griffin, who maintains that Christ, "so far from enduring our punishment, died to prevent our punishment." (Atone., p. 152.) And, again, that what he has done avails by "expression" solely, not by the "endurance of misery as accepted in measure or *kind*." (p. 156.) Also, that "justice is *not* satisfied" and "the law is not," but only the "protector of law;" where he adds—"Then men, in expressing this truth in figurative language, said the *law* was satisfied. At length, when a system was to be supported, the figurative origin of the phrase was forgotten, and the literal meaning was transmuted into marble and erected, in the church, as a standard of orthodoxy." (pp. 157-8.) Dr. Dwight also declares, to the same effect, that the "sufferings of Christ were of no value as mere sufferings," but only as in consideration of the fact that they were undergone for a valuable end, and borne by a good mind, with the spirit of benevolence and piety." (Serm. LIII.) Which is the same as to say that their value lay in their expression.

Looking now for some ground of justification that lies in expression; or, what is only a term answering to this, in impression; let us go back to first principles and trace the process by which a ground of justification for sinners is prepared in the mission of Christ.

We recognize, at the root of all moral distinctions, two distinct, simple ideas or principles; first the idea or principle of justice; and secondly that of beneficence transcending justice; one a reciprocal idea, represented by the word *jus*, which denotes fitness—that which answers to desert; the other an idea which regards simply the inward disposition of the agent himself, his state of love, and moves him, apart from all terms of reciprocity, all considerations of desert, to do good and extend favor, wherever he can do it, or in love can find an opportunity.

Thus, if some distinguished resident of our city had, last night, been murdered in his bed, our citizens would be heard, this morning, instigating the pursuit and arrest of the murderer and the public redress of the crime. 'Let justice be done upon him, let him receive his desert,' would be the universal cry. This is the judicial instinct in our nature; which, if we call it a vindictive, is so far from being a criminal instinct that, without it, neither law nor the protection of innocence would be possible. If we suppose the criminal, in the next place, to be arrested, and if now the wife of the murdered man, despite of her personal wrong, begins to study the comfort of the guilty man's cell, sending in gifts that may soften the rigor of his confinement, and addressing him in messages of counsel and kindness that may win him to repentance; that is love, beneficence, mercy—a virtue that transcends all considerations of reciprocity or desert, and indulges itself in pure favor.

It is sometimes argued, as a truth of consequence, that justice is only a form of benevolence. And as justice, like all other virtues, such as truth, meekness and purity,

is a useful virtue, necessary to social happiness and beauty, it can plausibly be inferred that perfect benevolence includes them all. Nay, it even includes sleep and digestion, in the same manner. And yet it may not be exactly true that we sleep and digest, for consciously benevolent reasons. But the question is not how far we can spread a word by our constructions, but whether, even if the penalties of justice seem to be needed as defenses of the public welfare, we may not still, in fact, be moved to their execution, by another kind of virtue than that which is occupied in the computation of beneficial consequences; whether, just as we receive the truth because it is true, not because of the beneficial consequences, we may not and do not execute justice also because it is just and for no other reason. Or, if we think of beneficial consequences, as we naturally must, whether still we are not backed by a different influence, viz., by the judicial and avenging instinct called justice. Have we not a respect to desert as well as to public effect? Undoubtedly we have, and if God were to maintain a government of *pure* justice, it would have respect to nothing else. He would set every thing upon a footing of reciprocity, and the excellence of his administration would be, that he does to every man exactly as he deserves; observing always the inherently *fit* connection (for that is the idea of justice) between right and reward, between wrong and suffering.

Justice, then, is not a form of benevolence, but a virtue ideally distinguished from it. It is the virtue of reciprocity. In commerce, it commands the giving to every man his due; in rectoral administration, the giving to

every subject what is fit or equal, a good match for his desert. Revenge is the perversion of justice, a spirit arrayed against wrong, not simply as wrong, but in a malevolent zeal to redress the selfish griefs of passion or pride.

But it does not follow, you will observe, that because justice is a virtue under conditions of reciprocity, there is therefore no higher kind of virtue transcending reciprocity. If it be right, on terms of reciprocity, to give every man what he deserves, it is a yet higher kind of virtue, to be able, under patience, forbearance and compassion, when it can be done safely, to give to men what is better than they deserve. And this precisely is the relation of justice and mercy. Justice gives what a man deserves; mercy what is better than he deserves. And one forbids the other.

Apply now this distinction to the divine government. God is himself a being of the highest virtue. Love is the reigning spirit of his character and dispositions. To do to men simply as they deserve is not a scale of administration that meets, or at all satisfies, his dispositions. He can rest only in doing to all creatures what is better than they deserve, even the best possible. But he must accommodate his administration to us as well as to himself, to our wants as well as to his own dispositions. And, in this view, he must make a beginning with us, under the terms of law and justice. For we need, first of all, to have the notion of law developed in us, by an experience under law. And the law must be in the imperative, it must say *do this*; and, to enforce the obligation or command, a sanction that is appropriate must be

added. The sanction must be one that stands in terms of justice. It would even be frivolous to say *do this*, in the imperative, and add, as proper to the enforcement, that he will otherwise do to the transgressor—better than he deserves. Or, if we speak of law as revealed in the conscience, and not in terms of outward commandment, it must here connect with a certain fearful looking for of evil, answering to the deserts of transgression. And, in order to this, or to the enforcement of obligation in this manner, the scale of nature and the laws of experience must be so adjusted as to return evil for evil, and answer, in groans of disorder, incapacity and misery, to the wrongs of transgression. The scale of natural experience must be arranged so as to make its appeal to us, not through the disinterested motives of truth, beauty, and goodness; but through the interested motives of loss and gain; answering, on one hand, to the law of desert or retributive justice; and, on the other, to the fact that we are creatures who require, at the beginning, a discipline of interest, and are capable of ascending to the higher conception of disinterested motive, and the ideal freedom of devotion or self-annihilation, only as we are prepared to it, under the schoolmaster discipline. As the experimental is first in order with us, and the ideal comes after, the fomentations of advantage and loss, hope and fear, must be first applied.

Such is the condition of law; and under the friction of an experience thus ordered, we come into the full sense of God's government, as a government of will and authority, an established order which, if we resist, we can not escape. We find that sin, attended always and

scorched by the evils of a retributive experience, becomes itself a law in the members; propagating sin as the penalty of sin, and with sin every sort of internal mischief, dislocation, discord, bitterness, and bondage. By the same retributive experience, the sense of desert and self-condemnation is sharpened to a keen remorse, and a well-instructed certainty of greater evils to come. And so, dying under law and justice, we are ready for another kind of handling, that of love and mercy; which, beginning at the point of loss and self-renouncing despair, may raise us up into the disinterested, ideal virtue of love and devotion. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; which, if it be said of the Mosaic law, is said of it only as being the type of that first stage of discipline, just described.

Here enters the divine movement called redemption. Not that God has concluded to be better than he at first intended; but that, having made us know ourselves and sin,—for by the law is the knowledge of sin,—we are now able to receive better things. Therefore he brings into action, as confronting the scheme of justice and reciprocity, a scheme of love and mercy which, in a certain sense, contends against the retributive action of the former; and which, if we can suffer it, may deliver and redeem us from its power. If we call the primary or the scheme of justice natural, the second or the scheme of mercy, that which proposes to do by us better than we deserve, is the supernatural. And as mercy rejoiceth against judgment, these two powers are to be figured as contesting over us and around us each to get possession of our destiny. We only must not imagine that God is

divided against himself, or that he is working miracles to overcome his own appointed laws; for however distinct in idea the two systems, the natural and the supernatural, may be to us, they are yet, in some higher view, one system to Him. Indeed if we speak of them as contesting, one against the other, they are yet, in another view, co-workers, in preparing us to the one result which is dearest to his goodness; and we spend our lives between them, seeking our orbit under them, as the orbs of heaven seek theirs, between the systematically contesting forces by which they are swayed.

In this view, it results that what we call our state of probation, under sin, is neither a state of penalty, nor the contrary; but an anomalous and mixed state, a state in which we are held between contesting powers. It can not be said that the law is executing its penalties upon us, or that Combe on the Constitution of Man contains the whole gospel of life; neither is it true that the gospel of Christ's mercy has shut away the contact of justice and retributive order. The waves of justice meet the waves of mercy, controverting and qualifying each other; mercy tempering the flow of justice and interspersing its distributions with the softer gifts of favor and compassion; justice applying its rugged fomentations and shooting its pains into the complacent bosom of prosperous and confident sin. And the design is, by the mutual contact of these two powers, to give us the benefit of both; not to discontinue one and substitute the other.

Accordingly we see that whatever is undertaken or done for our redemption, or by Christ as revealing and

consummating the redemptive movement, nothing can be so done as to break asunder and abolish the system of law and justice; for the joint action of both forces is necessary and one as truly as the other. We need as much to feel the sacred authority of law, and the consequent evil and ill desert of sin, as we do to be delivered from the power and just condemnation of sin; for without one, we shall be wholly indifferent to and incapable of the other. What is wanted, therefore, is that our deliverance be wrought in some way that shall compliment the law and be a virtual justification before it. But in order to this, it is not necessary, of course, that the penalty we are under should be exacted of Christ, or executed on Christ, because it is not executed on us. All that is needed is that the future action of law and reciprocal justice be made certain, in case the transgression is continued; and, if it is forsaken, that the pardon should be yielded, under a provision so tempered as to save the sanctity of law and the rectoral honor and authority of God in its administration. In other words, some expression of God requires to be made, that will as effectually impress our mind with a sense of fear and ill-desert in transgression, as the execution of penalty would do under a system of pure justice. If Christ and the Holy Spirit, one revealing the divine love and feeling before us, and the other breasting the currents of judicial consequence and misery within, rescue us, by their joint action, from the primal dispensation of law; it needs to be so done that God shall appear to honor that dispensation and not to be arrayed in discontent against it—so done that, instead of encouraging license in us, we shall rather

feel the more deeply the exceeding sinfulness of our sin and the certain destruction, in which, unrepented of, it will end. If we say that justice must be satisfied, it is not that justice as a mere subjective impulse or feeling in God must be; but only that the reciprocal system of public law, the system of retributive order he administers, must be vindicated by some transaction or expression that will as effectually honor it in the conscience, verify it to the fears, and sanctify it in the reverence of mankind, as if the penalties of justice were literally and rigidly executed.

How this has been effected, in the life and death of Christ, I endeavored to show, in the twenty pages of my discourse at Cambridge, which seem to have been so generally overlooked, (pp. 218-38;) and I think it can not be necessary to go over the ground of the argument again. Suffice to say that, in the pages referred to, I specified four methods by which he fortified the sanctity of law and the judicial righteousness of God, in the impressions of mankind. First, by the more rigorous and impressive announcement of its penal retributions, in the future life. Secondly, by his own transcendent obedience to its precepts, and the exhibition of its sacred beauty in his character. Thirdly, by the expense and pains-taking of his suffering life and passion, viewed as undergone to re-establish it in us. Fourthly, in the article of his bloody death, considered as counterpart to the uses of blood in the ritual service; where blood, as containing the life, is regarded as a sacred element which, by its application, consecrates, again, the Just Name and Law of the Being

whose altar it sprinkles—removing, thus, the dishonors of transgression and clothing in authority, before the evil conscience of sin, the throne it has violated.

If the persons who have been so much offended by the heresy of my doctrine of Christ, had given a little attention to these twenty pages, and had seen that refusing to be comforted in justice is not the same thing, as refusing to be comforted in sin or sorrow, I think it would have been as much to the advantage of their patience and candor as of their comfort. Or, admitting that I am wholly mistaken here, as to the manner in which Christ made the requisite expression of God, or the requisite impression in us, to constitute a ground of justification; they might still comfort themselves in observing, that the mistake involves no fatal heresy. For if I had denied every thing which the wit of man has been able to devise, concerning the matter in question, I should still be found within the limits of accepted orthodoxy. Thus bishop Butler says, and a hundred parallel authorities could be cited:—

“How and in what particular way it [the sacrifice of Christ] had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavored to explain; but I do not find that the scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, i. e. pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the scripture has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. The doctrine of the Gospel appears to

be, not only that Christ taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy of which it is by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but moreover that he put them into this capacity of salvation by what he did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered, on our part, *without disputing how it was procured on his.*"—(*Analogy*, p. 220.)

I hope it will not be charged as a heresy in me, that I am not as negative in my view of the subject as bishop Butler; denying that the scriptures give us any light on the question how it is that Christ "rendered repentance of the efficacy of which it is, by what he did and suffered." Neither can it be a heresy, as regards the matter of justification, if I state no such alternative between repentance unavailing, and "repentance accepted unto eternal life;" for, if I maintain that Christ makes repentance possible and a fact, and makes it efficacious in pardon or absolution, by one and the same process, I do not therefore deny the essential truth of justification, that he makes it efficacious. I only affirm that he has "put us in this capacity of salvation" and also in another at the same time.

I am well aware that in the account I have made of the sufferings of Christ, in the twenty pages referred to, and in other representations of my book, I do not coin-

cide with certain current impressions; and if these be held immovably, as beyond the possibility of correction or qualification, what I have said must, so far, be unsatisfactory. I could not wish it to be otherwise. I assume the right, as I feel it to be my duty, to violate these impressions. Only be it observed that, in doing it, I still adhere, as firmly as others, to the necessity of a ground of justification, prepared in the sufferings and death of Christ.

Thus it appears that some have been offended by my denial that the sufferings of Christ are accepted of God, as a direct substitute, or a substitute in kind for our sufferings. Drs. Griffin and Dwight, as you have seen, do the same. Besides, I feel bound to say, yet more emphatically than before, that this whole scheme of suffering in Christ, substituted directly for penal suffering in us, is a bare assumption, justified by no scripture authority whatever. It stands connected always with the representation that the victim in the ancient sacrifice had its atoning power, in virtue of the suffering put upon it; a representation favored by no word of the ancient Hebrew literature. On the contrary, the atoning power of the victim stands connected rather with the pains, or pains-taking expense of the owner himself, and it is under a figure of correspondence with these that Christ atones for sin. Accordingly we find, as a fact that is absolutely decisive on the point in question, that atonements were ordered in money as well as in the sacrifice of victims; where, of course, the atoning power depends, not on the suffering of the money, but on the expense and loss incurred in it. "Then shall they give, every

man, a ransom for his soul, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary; and then shalt thou take the atonement money that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your sins." It corresponds also that, in the ceremony of the scape-goat, it is expressly required that the animal shall *not* suffer, but "shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement," and be "let go for a scape-goat into the wilderness." You perceive, in both these cases, as clearly as possible, that the notion of atonement rested not on the sufferings of the victim at all, but on the expense and loss and pains-taking confessions of the owner, who in this manner signified his wish to make amends to God, for the desecration of law and duty by his sin. And here it is that Christ, by his suffering, fulfills the type of the sacrifice. It has its value, not as being so much suffering, but as declaring the righteousness of God in the remission of sins that are past and, by what it declares or expresses, clothing the desecrated law in eternal sanctity and honor.

If we choose to say that Christ came into membership with us, under the corporate law of evil in the race, and let the currents of penal causes roll over him in waves of temptation and suffering; showing thus how immovably fixed the laws of retribution are, in the fact that they will not stay the qualified action they have in our system, to spare even innocence when it comes in their way; there is nothing incredible in this, if only it be said that Christ put himself in their way for some benevolent end or reason, apart from the ostentation of suffering, and that what he suffers is no way penal in

the experience; save that the currents of causes under which he suffers are themselves penal, as related organically to the sins of the race. The suffering, in this view, avails by what it expresses, not as being simply suffering.* The only objection to this view is that it wears a look too artificial and philosophic, a look so remote from the simple exercises and types of the sacrificial system, as to have the appearance of a modern after-thought. And still it may be argued, with a degree of plausibility, from certain uses by Paul of the word *law*, as when he speaks of "the law of sin and death," that such a conception was not too remote or philosophic to be entertained by him.

Again, it has been a subject of complaint, and still may be, that in the account I have made of the sufferings and death of Christ, I do not represent them as having their value in the expression made before the open universe of worlds; but only in the impression they produce *in us* of the righteousness of God and the sanctity of his law. But I am not aware that the scriptures undertake to inform us of any effects wrought by the death of Christ, in other worlds, or before the moral universe of creatures. They do indeed speak, in a single passage, of "the manifold wisdom of God, made known by the church, to principalities and powers in heavenly places." And there is no doubt that every thing discovered of God's proceedings, by holy minds, will be a contribution of "wisdom"; but this is a matter wholly

* Something like this appears to be the representation of Dr. Porter, in his able and timely sermon, at Litchfield.—(*Nat. Preach.*, pp. 198-9.)

distinct from the impression that Christ is transacting here, as on a central stage of being, a scene of suffering which is necessary to vindicate the honor of God, in the forgiveness of sins, before his moral universe. The scriptures have a sober and practical spirit. They would not even have us to go up into heaven, or beyond the sea, after God himself. They meet us close at hand to tell us what God is doing for us, unwilling to amuse a vagrant and licentious fancy in our sin. If they sometimes lead us up to trace the origin of things, in grounds and patterns that are transcendental in the divine nature, or the Eternal Word; they are yet as little disposed as possible to gratify our curiosity, by opening to us the remote implications of causes acting, or events transpiring round us; and above all careful, and for the best of reasons, not to make us metropolitans, by showing us that the transactions of our world are central, in their efficacy and value, to the universal government of God. It may please the vanity of theology to scheme a theory of salvation, wrought on the earth and for it, magnificent enough to comprehend the whole contour of being and explain what effects are wrought by it on the peoples of Orion or the Milky Way; but if I am a little jealous of all such licentious assumptions and stretches of theory, if they seem to exceed the measure of Christian modesty and sobriety, and, in fact, to be only theologic figments, that withdraw our minds from the more solid and practical conceptions of Christianity, as a plan of grace wrought in our world and for it, and of course under laws of effect that pertain to humanity itself, I hope to be excused. Or, if I offend in so doing, it can not be

worse, or more remote from orthodoxy, than to deny, with bishop Butler, the possibility of any authorized conceptions whatever of the subject in question.

Let it now be granted that, in Christ, or in the impressions made in us by his life and death, answering to the impressions that would be made by a vigorous adherence to the terms of the primal system of reciprocity and justice, a sufficient ground of justification is provided; in other words, let it be granted that Christ, in opening a second stage of government, which proposes to take us away from our deserts and do by us better than we deserve, has done it in such a way as not to abrogate or weaken the authority of the first, and so that both shall stand together, maintaining their joint action upon us; the next point is to conceive or settle the true idea of justification as a result in actual experience. And here, at the outset, we are met by the distinction of an objective and subjective justification, answering to the same distinction already traced in the ritual conceptions of sacrifice and atonement. The term *justification*, here, answers indeed to the term *remission*, there, as nearly as a political or judicial symbol can, to a priestly and ritual. And, as a mere objective remission or formal absolution is nothing, unless it be executed by a subjective deliverance from the power and penal bondage of the sins remitted, so an objective formal justification is really nothing, save as there is executed, in the soul and its character, an inward and actual deliverance from the retributive causes by which it is corrupted and held in penal subjection. The objective,

forensic justification is nothing, in fact, but a mode of conceiving the inward subjective deliverance. One is, in real truth, the other; just as condemnation, passed for sin, is a state of being, called the state of condemnation, or spiritual death.

Instead, therefore, of stating an alternative between repentance, or a new birth in spiritual freedom, on one side; and forgiveness, or justification, on the other, after the manner of bishop Butler in the extract just now cited; they are only to be taken as different conceptions of the same thing. To deliver a soul from spiritual death and bondage, and quicken it in freedom and new capacity is, so far, taking it away from its deserts, or disappointing the claims of justice and retributive order. And precisely here is the reason why it must be done, in such a way as to cut off the appearance of abrogating the law system, or destroying its authority; for, in so far as that system is reined back, in the suspense of punishment, and made to be a system of discipline more than of proper penalty, and in so far as it is actually displaced, in the spiritual deliverance of the penitent, there is an appearance of breach upon it, which needs to be rebutted, by impressions from another source, that will fortify and sanctify its authority. To renew and clear a soul of death is to roll back justice from it, or the currents of judicial causes in it, and, in that view, is a grace dispensed against justice; and the forensic justification many speak of and think of, regarding nothing else, is yet only an objective conception of an inward subjective change, which, on that account, is called "justification of life." And here it will be found,

accordingly, is the real issue between Christianity and the gospel of naturalism held by some Unitarians. They say that the laws of nature are laws of justice, and justice must have its way, otherwise God would dishonor and throw into confusion the very principles of order, both in his moral and providential government. Hence there can be no justification of life, till the retributive justice of desert and death is run out or satisfied. We say, on the other hand, that God undertakes, in Christianity, to do by us better than we deserve; that he introduces a scheme of supernatural work and power, which is at once complimentary to and redemptive from the other; and that both together are the real system of God, a system which, in both the parts, looks equally to one and the same result; viz., the training of moral and free beings, by a double experience, to a state of established holiness and felicity; a system also which, however distinctly it may seem to be two to us, is yet an orderly and complete whole to him, as truly as the system of the firmament; a system, not unlikely, that contains the final cause even of the firmament and settles its terms of order.

Thus we say, in the old theology, that there are two covenants, the covenant of works—do this and live; and the covenant of grace—believe and live; where the radical idea, sounded to the bottom, is that the system of God, as developed in Christianity, has two sides or departments; related to each other as justice and mercy, nature and grace. And just here is the distinction of evangelism, in all ages; that, in Christ, there is a power to roll back the currents of nature and justice, and dis-

pense a justification of life that is relatively supernatural—all this in one consistent plan that was laid before the foundations of the world.

It may be important to add that, while we identify, in this manner, objective justification and the justification of life, which latter delivers the soul internally from the judicial consequences of sin, it is not to be understood that every thing done by Christ looks toward the producing of impressions that substitute the impressions of penalty and so provide a ground of justification. The direct aim of his work is to reconcile us to God ; or, what is the same, it is to communicate God to souls separated from God, and to regenerate in them a new divine principle of spiritual life. In this view, his whole work terminates in impressions ; and then, among these impressions, are impressions that are substitutes for the impressions of penalty and serve as compensations to the original order of justice,—assisting also, at the same time, by the conviction of sin they produce in us and the want they create of grace and pardon, the operative force of those other and more quickening impressions by which Christ will execute his other and ultimate purpose, our reconciliation to God.

Or, if it be demanded how, in this view, justification differs from sanctification, it differs, I answer, in the fact that, in the term 'sanctification,' the mind is looking simply toward the deliverance and restoration of character ; while in 'justification' it looks toward the deliverance of retributive evils and pains. The state of moral incapacity and bondage we are in may be regarded, either as a state of corruption, or as a state of retributive

misery answering to our ill desert. The deliverance of this is justification; the deliverance of that is sanctification. One is the restoration of confidence; the other of purity. The two are distinguishable in idea, but inseparable in fact. At bottom, they are one and the same change, save that one regards this change as related to a given measure of deserved penalty; the other as related to the measureless benefit of a grace that is only concerned to do by us better than we deserve, and discharge the fullness of the divine love into our character and experience. The contrast, commonly stated, between a mere objective justification, and the sanctification of the life, it may easily be seen is no real contrast; for unless the objective remission carries a subjective deliverance, it is only a name for something, which has no reality in experience; a formula of prison delivery that leaves the doors of the prison still shut. The true contrast is that which lies between the delivery executed in us, when viewed in one light, and the same when viewed in another; in one as related to the justice of God armed against our sin, in the other to the boundless fullness of God and the fruition of a divine experience. Or if it be imagined, as another distinction, that justification is already executed in the believer, while sanctification is not, the scriptures speak in a different manner, as if both were executed; representing Christ as being already "made unto us righteousness and sanctification;" and declaring in the boldness of their confidence, "but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus." And this, exactly, is the natural and proper language of Christian experience; for as we are justified

by faith, so we are sanctified by faith; and faith, in both cases, takes the new state of freedom and life, into which it is initiated, as being already and before the time complete; only embracing this confidence more decisively and less faintly in one, because it relates backward to the definite claims of justice; while, in the other, it has a forward reference to an elevation that is indeterminate and without limit.

Regarding justification, then, as having its reality in a subjective deliverance from the judicial consequences of sin, the question may be raised, whether we are to consider the objective and subjective conceptions of it as standing in one order of relation, or in another and reverse order. Are we to conceive that God passes an objective sentence of justification upon them that believe, which is followed by an internal and experimental deliverance; or that executing this deliverance, in and through the faith of them that believe, we apprehend the fact, or conceive it, in a way of objective representation that supports our faith? The former is the conception of Tholuck and other distinguished theologians of Germany. Thus, in his Commentary on the Romans, (Chap. v., 16,) he says, "the objective sentence, *condemnation*, issues, subjectively, as misery; and the '*free gift*,' justification, issues or is manifested in perfect holiness, hence, also, in bliss. In the interpretation of these statements, we must take special care to discriminate between the subjective and the objective. The expositors who seized, exclusively, on one or the other view, have never been able to arrive at perfect perspicuity." I differ from this representation, as far as I can see, only in saying that,

instead of conceiving the condemnation or the free gift of justification to be passed objectively and then to issue or be executed in subjective misery or bliss; we are simply to conceive the misery or the bliss, executed in us, under these objective forms, condemnation, or justification; seeing thus in God, or in the will of God, that which has its reality in ourselves. This corresponds with the universal analogy of the sacrificial terms, applied to Christ and his work, and also with the language of Paul concerning justification itself: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation [objective] to them that are in Christ Jesus; for the law of the spirit of life [the subjective renovating power] in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death" [the penal bondage of transgression.] Which is the same as to say, 'I am not condemned of God any more, but justified before him; because I am internally delivered from the consequences of death that reigned, as by a law, within me.' He does not say that he is justified, objectively, in the "free gift," which issues in deliverance; but that he is delivered and in that sees that he is justified. The difference, however, is not important. It only seemed to be proper, as I am using the terms 'objective' and 'subjective,' in a different manner from other evangelical writers of the day, to state exactly where the difference lies. If it should be said that the particular passage, Dr. Tholuck is expounding, favors his mode of conceiving the relations of the two classes of terms, I will not object. Not unlikely the scriptures speak in both modes, as they naturally would. I only think that, bringing into view the great fact that we are always throwing subjective

truths into objective representations, and are scarcely content, in any case, till we have done it; also, the fact that religion, standing as it does in faith, requires to have its outgoing, trustful exercise in objective forms of truth, and would even die of suffocation, if it were shut up to a mere reflective exercise,—considering this, I think we are to expect that all the most subjective truths will be revealed, or set before us, in objective forms; and that just here, in the providing of a fit array of patterns for the heavenly things and their objective representation, the wondrous and divine art of revelation will be most of all displayed. Only let us not be so childish, when speaking in the manner of Dr. Tholuck, as to imagine, (which I am quite certain he does not,) that God takes a local seat of judgment, in some supernal region, and passes sentences there of condemnation or delivery, which he afterward executes; for the execution, considered as proceeding from his will, is the sentence,—except that we may need, in practice, to *think* of it under the former and more objective mode of representation.

I have endeavored, in this manner, to exhibit the true import of the work of Christ, as viewed under the political symbol of justification; and the result corresponds, you perceive, as exactly as it could, under a different kind of symbol, with the view developed under the priestly terms of the altar, and particularly the terms *propitiation*, *atonement*, and *remission*. In both, every thing depends on subjective impressions; in both, these impressions are realized under and represented by objective terms. A full and real meaning is given thus to

all the terms of scripture, and no one class is permitted to exclude, or devour the others. And yet they are all seen to coalesce, in a consistent and common result.

I have not dwelt in particular on the terms *ransom* and *redemption*. The former is generally regarded as a figure of purchase, or payment; as when one is said to be ransomed out of captivity. But this is doubtful. The same Greek word is used in the Septuagint, as a translation of the sacrificial word COVER, commonly translated *atonement*. So of the word *redemption*, which is a translation of a Greek word, radically the same. In this view, they are both words of the altar, and it will be found that, in their actual uses in the New Testament, they are constantly interwoven with sacrificial terms and allusions, a fact which decisively proves that they are employed, not as commercial, but as objective sacrificial figures.

Another class of expressions, commonly supposed to be sacrificial in their origin, such as "being made a curse for us," "bruised for our iniquities," "the chastisement of our peace was upon him," "with his stripes we are healed," are manifestly not so, but show as clearly as possible that they class with the word 'justification,' as political or judicial figures. For it scarcely need be said that there was no curse, or bruising, or chastisement, or stripes, on the victim of the altar.

The expressions, "bearing our sins," and "being made sin for us," are possibly ambiguous, and may be taken either as ritual or judicial figures. In either case they are good objective representations of the suffering mercy, by which we are cleared of our sins, restored to peace with God and spiritual life.

In the same manner, all the other forms of the scripture fall into place and find their natural significance. And the grand result discovered in all is justification by faith, without the deeds of the law,—THE JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE. Or it is deliverance from the law of sin and death, by the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus. Or it is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. Or it is God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. Be it one or the other, I make no selection, for it is one and the same in all.

If now you distrust me in these interpretations, or expositions of the principal figures of the scripture, which resolve the objective terms, both of the altar and the political state, by their subjective meaning, or the subjective experiences they represent; one thing, at least, is clear, and it ought to be a matter of some consequence to you, that the practical result or issue of my heresy is a plan of supernatural grace and salvation; containing all that belongs distinctively to the operative scheme of evangelism. It is a scheme that proposes to save us, out of the terms of justice and desert. It undertakes to do by us better than we deserve, and make us feel as deeply the conviction of what we deserve, as if it held us rigidly to that and that alone. It rests the hope of its efficacy, not on any proclamation of lenity, or profession of pater-nity, but in the keeping on foot and preserving in joint action two distinct schemes—call them testaments, cove-nants, systems, or whatever we please; one that works on our natural experience, apart from all consent, and by

reason of a want of consent, becomes the letter that killeth ; and one that, working on and through the consent of faith, clears the subject of his judicial bondage and fall under the other, and in that way giveth life. If we call one natural, the other is relatively supernatural, operating by methods and powers not in the retributive order of nature and justice. A beginning is made with us, in terms of reciprocity and natural justice, which we can not disallow and do instinctively acknowledge ; reducing us to a state of guilt and condemnation, which is the real experimental knowledge of sin ; and from this bad condition, as a basis, we are raised up in terms of grace and favor, to a state of love and faith transcending our instinctive notions of justice and even our adequate conception, in the mere life of nature—a state of liberty and vital union with God. And so the purpose of God is consummated, in our being made partakers, supernaturally, with Him, in that which is above the lower virtue of desert and justice,—the spirit of love, in which he does good to the evil, and which is the crowning honor of his character and his kingdom. The two points that distinguish evangelism, as a plan of salvation, are held as firmly, in this view, you perceive, as in any other—God is just in justifying the ungodly ; and character, based in faith and not in self-culture, is a fruit of grace and a supernatural birth in the soul.

Meantime Christ is seen, in all that he does, to be acting as a power, a renovating and quickening power—just as he is constantly represented in the scriptures. All results, whether of justification or sanctification, for they are essentially implicated one with the other, he accom-

plishes, by what he does in us, and not by something done upon God. And so that large part, that almost body itself of the Christian doctrine of grace, which has fallen, so generally, out of place in the meager terms of our speculative theology, is restored. It is not said that Christ has opened a passage through the law, by some action one side of us, and bought the Holy Spirit to lead us through it; and that this is the whole plan of salvation—which, in fact, no preacher, though he affirm it a hundred times a day, can really adhere to so as not to break over it, in appeals that offer Christ to love and feeling—but the doctrine is that Christ is wholly a power, the wisdom of God and the power; a convincing, constraining, justifying grace of love offered to thought without, and operating formatively with the undistinguishable grace of the Spirit within; so that when the soul receives him and rests her faith in him, Christ is formed within as the principle of eternal life and beatific union with God. If this be heresy, it is yet the truth of scripture, which if any man deny or can not preach, he disallows the corner stone itself.

What I mean by the subjective-objective view of the work of Christ, I think is now sufficiently plain. I feel a degree of confidence too that the truth of my exposition is sufficiently supported, by its internal evidences and the testimonies of scripture. But the question, I suppose, will here be raised, whether my exposition is consistent or not with historic orthodoxy? Which, I answer, first, is not a question of any very decisive consequence, either to me or to you, if only the doctrine be

true. But a better, because a more practical and probable answer is, that, in one view, it certainly is not consistent with historic orthodoxy; and that, in another, less superficial and more really intelligent view, I have the strongest conviction that it is. The antecedent improbability that any doctrine of Christ, which is really novel in the matter, is true, I most readily admit. At the same time, an exposition which holds no agreement with the *form* of any preceding solution, or doctrine, or theory, is none the less likely to be true, or even orthodox, on that account. For if, still, it is the manifest issue of the previous attempts; if they are clearly seen to be only rudimental; never to have come to any settled and generally accepted or mature result of doctrine; always to have been moving, in fact, toward the given point, or issue stated; then we are to judge that the point, or issue stated is probably true; and, in the sense most profoundly respectful and most genuinely intelligent, orthodox also; that is, consistent with the inmost mind, or meaning of the church. And if this be admitted as the true notion of historic orthodoxy, then I believe that the exposition I have given is orthodox—otherwise it is not and I could not wish it to be.

It seems to be imagined, by many, that the doctrine of the work of Christ became, long ages ago, a settled and properly accepted church doctrine, like that of the trinity after the Nicene Council. Contrary to this, the principal questions pertaining to the subject, though often discussed by the doctors of the church, and resolved by many different theories, do not appear to have been formally undertaken by any Council, prior to the

Reformation ; or to the Council of Trent, whose sitting was occasioned by the Reformation. During the fifteen centuries of the Christian era, preceding the advent of Luther, the doctrine of Christ was passing through phases of change so remarkable, beginning with errors to us apparently so very strange and wild, as to show, most convincingly, the inherent difficulties of the subject, and that probably a long time will yet be wanted, to bring it to a clear maturity. Nothing is more unlikely than that now, in a day of agitation so intense, and of external commotion so violent, it is going, suddenly, to burst forth cleared of all error, and become an established, immutable form of orthodoxy—whether in the studies of Wittemberg and Geneva, or in the laborious intrigues of Trent.

In this view, it is important that I should indicate, briefly, the course of the church history, or the history of opinions, pertaining to the subject. Thus, in the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it will be found that the Christian teachers, such for example as Clement of Rome, make use of language that well accords with that of the apostles themselves. He says, in the simple words of faith and the kingdom,—“Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood is in the sight of God ; which, being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world.” * * * “And we also being called, by the same will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, neither by our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the works which we have done in the holiness of our hearts ; but by that faith by

which God Almighty has justified all men, from the beginning."—(1st Ep. Cor., chap. IV. & XIV.)

But the time of speculative theology is now come, and with this, a different picture and more melancholy is to be exhibited. Here a single extract from Knapp's Theology may be taken as giving a sufficiently accurate account of the speculative doctrine of Christ, which prevailed, with only casual modifications, during the first ten centuries; or rather during the eight theologic centuries following the first two, prior to the proper existence of theology. After describing the manner in which the simple language of scripture, representing Christ's death as a sacrifice, was familiarly used for the first two centuries of the church, in a way of practical impression apart from all theory; he then exhibits speculative theology, making its beginning in the third century, and issuing its first attempt in the following theory:—

“‘Ever after the fall, the Devil had the whole human race in his power; he ruled over men like a tyrant over his vassals and employed them for his own purposes.’ Thus far they had the support of the bible. But here they began to philosophize beyond what is written. ‘From the captivity God might indeed have rescued them, by the exercise of his omnipotence. But he was restrained by his justice from doing this violence. He therefore offered Satan a ransom, in consideration of which he should release mankind. This ransom was the death of Christ as a divine being. In accordance with this theory, Origen interpreted the text, “He gave his life a ransom for men,” as denoting the ransom paid to the Devil, not to God. Satan had consented to the com-

pact. But he wished fraudulently to retain Jesus, whom he considered only as the best and most pious man, under his own power, and so he slew this innocent being. He was now, therefore, justly compelled to liberate the human race.'

This theory was first adopted by the Grecian church and especially by Origen, through whose influence it became prevalent, and was adopted, at length, by Basilus, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Nestorius and others. From the Greeks it was communicated to the Latins, among whom it was first distinctly held by Ambrosius and afterward by Augustine, through whose influence it was almost universal in the Latin church. In this church, they endeavored to perfect the theory. Satan, they added, was *deceived* in the transaction; for, taking Jesus to be a mere man, and not knowing that he was also the Son of God, he was not able to retain even *him* after he had slain him. And it was necessary for Christ to assume a human body, in order to deceive the Devil as fishes are caught by baits.

So prevalent was this theory in the Latin church, before the twelfth century, that Abelard declares,—*"Omnes doctores nostri, post apostolos, in hoc conveniunt;"* and Bernhard of Clairvaux was so firmly persuaded of its truth as to declare that Abelard, who held that the devil never possessed, in a literal sense, such power as was ascribed to him, ought rather to be chastised with rods than reasoned with."—(*Chris. Theo., Andov. Ed., Vol. II., pp. 325–6.*)

This, I suppose it should be added, is the more palpable, superficial view of the doctrine of Christ, that pre-

ailed, during the period specified;—the gift of Christ was in form a ransom paid to the devil. Which, if it be considered more deeply, will be seen to have covered a real and important truth, nay, the grand truth itself of the Christian salvation; viz., that Jesus, by the ransom of his death and sacrifice, brought us out from under the subjective dominion of evil and set us free. Besides, there were blended, here and there, with the view stated, frequent references of thought to the positive efficacy of the incarnation, as a means of imparting the divine nature to men, and quickening them anew in the Divine Life. Accordingly, a competent scholar is able to give the following, as a true account of the real substance of doctrine, or the operative faith, held under a form so remote from our sympathy, during the period in question.

“The reconciliation of man to God, the incarnation of God in Christ, and the union of the divine with the human which is realized by it, were laid down as the general principle, including all particular definitions, which was ever and anon adopted by the theologians of that age. Thus a view was formed of the atonement, which we may term the mystical; inasmuch as it is founded on a general and comprehensive view of the subject, rather than on philosophic definitions.”—(*Baur in Hagenbach, Vol. I., p. 355.*)

The next period in the history of the doctrine is introduced by Anselm, at the latter part of the eleventh century. Manichæism was now vanishing, and the reign of demons over the world ceasing to be the important article of faith it had been. Anselm, therefore, had

courage to maintain that the death of Jesus was necessary in reference to the holiness of God, and not as in connection with the kingdom of Satan over men. And the doctrine he asserted was much the same with that which is now maintained, by many teachers of the Anglican church and by here and there one among ourselves, under the figure of debt; a doctrine whose peculiarity consists in adhering too closely to that figure, and holding it in a manner too nearly literal.

Anselm was followed, in the thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas, who brought forward the terms of the priesthood and the altar-service; giving greater prominence, as he properly might, to these. But he pressed on the article of suffering, with so great violence as to maintain, by specific proofs, "that Christ endured in his head, hands, and feet, all the sufferings which men have to endure, in their reputation, worldly possessions, body, and soul."—(*Hagenbach, Vol. II., p. 43.*)

Other teachers, between the Angelic Doctor and Luther, presented modifications and partial contradictions, both of his doctrine and that of Anselm. An evident approach had been made toward some catholic apprehension of the subject, and yet the astonishing darkness that rested on the mind of Luther, before he came to his grand discovery of justification by faith and found, in that, his Christian liberty, shows how little was generally understood at that time, even by the more intelligent class of disciples, of the grand, life-giving doctrine of salvation by Christ. Now the Christian world is divided. Protestantism, on one side, promulgating, even as a discovery, its doctrine of justification by faith; and Roman-

ism, for the first time, endeavoring, on the other, at the Council of Trent, to settle the catholic doctrine of redemption. Henceforth we are to have two orthodoxies; neither of which, however, will be rigidly adhered to, or conformed to, on either side. As Protestants, we have no doubt that the true substance of doctrine is with us. Still we do not suppose and never have supposed, that the theory or theoretic form of the doctrine of atonement by Jesus Christ, is finally ascertained and immovably settled. On the contrary, it can be shown, beyond dispute, that our view of the subject here in New England has been suffering a constant process of modification, from one generation to another. We have renounced the ideas of penal suffering, of imputation, of limited atonement, and, in fact, have cast the whole subject in molds of our own. Only one hundred and forty years ago, our fathers, for example, were able to say of Christ, as the true account of his sufferings and death, that "he underwent the *punishment* due to us, which we should have borne and suffered; being made a curse for us, and enduring *most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul*"!—(*Sayb. Plat., Cong. Ord., p. 186.*)

Who is there now of you here present that accepts these words as the Christian truth,—who that does not shudder even at the sound of them, when they are recited? And yet I am required by you, or at least by the public, to answer whether the doctrine I have been teaching accords with proper historic orthodoxy! Which I answer, as I trust, with all becoming meekness, when I say that I really think it does; and also, with as evident truth, that it certainly does not, unless there can

be found some deep and, as it were, unconscious, undiscovered meaning, underneath the mobilities and changes of orthodoxy, which it fulfills and justifies.

And this, I think, will be easily made to appear. If I had time and leisure, I would go into the doctrine of justification by faith as maintained by Luther, and would undertake to show that the precise operative truth of it, that which made it true to him, is no other than the doctrine I have stated; however different it may at first view appear. But I will only refer you, here, to the fact that the famous words of Staupitz, which are said to have shed such light on the distressed mind of Luther, and finally to have led him out of his bondage into the liberty of Christ,—words that were, in fact, the beginning, at once, of his grand mission as a reformer, and of the justification of life in his heart,—these words, I say, hang all their virtue on the assurance that God only waits to be merciful; that he is not estranged from us, but we averse from him; and that Christ, in his death and sacrifice, came to *assure us* of this, and so to bring us unto God. The very point of his counsel coincides with my supposed heresy, and just this heresy it was that Luther himself wanted. He was not in trouble because he wanted some theory of compensation for sin or punishment, but his trouble came of the fact that he was afraid of God and could not find how to assure himself before God, or how to make himself, what he evidently must be, to be accepted of God. Staupitz, therefore, says:—

“Why do you distress yourself with these speculations and high thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ,

to the blood which he has shed for you ; it is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of the Redeemer. Trust in him—in the righteousness of his life, in the expiatory sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink from him. GOD IS NOT AGAINST YOU ; IT IS YOU WHO ARE ESTRANGED AND AVERSE FROM GOD. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favor.”—(*Luther's Works, Vol. II., Liepsic Ed., p. 264.*)

These fragrant words of life, out of which, as a consecrated parentage, sprang both the faith of Luther and his doctrine, affirm precisely all that is most distinctive in my supposed heresy ; that God is not to be conciliated to us but we to him, and that Christ came, not literally to appease his justice, but to “assure us of his favor.”

But there are two points in regard to this matter of coincidence with historic orthodoxy, that I wish more especially to make. And—

I. That the subjective-objective, or representatively objective doctrine I have asserted, coincides with the real truth of imputation ; justifying a qualified assent to that doctrine ; requiring it in the practical uses of life ; and containing, I suppose, all that has made it true to its adherents ;—precisely that, neither more nor less. Thus it will be found that, while the greater part of the New England teachers reject this doctrine, which no one can deny is a doctrine of the Reformation, and with Dr. Emmons declare it even to be “absurd,” I am actually maintaining it, in a form that preserves whatever is vital

and practically valuable in it. Instead of allowing the oft reiterated declaration, that there is no such thing as imputation in the scriptures, they seem to me, on the contrary, to be full of it. The whole objective side of the scripture doctrine of Christ,—“bearing our sins,” “made sin for us,” “having the iniquity of us all laid upon him,” “wounded for our transgressions,” “our ransom,” “our righteousness,” “righteousness imputed without works,”—in all these objectivities, the mind is occupied with notions of a putative, or imputed grace. Neither are these barren fictions, but they have all a sound reality and force; and they are even necessary, in that view, to the full power and easy working of the grace of the gospel in us. When the confession of sins was made upon the head of the goat, under the Mosaic ritual, and he was driven into the wilderness, to signify their being carried away, doubtless it was not true that the goat became a sinner, or that any one sin was really put upon him; and yet the rite had a real value and power; and the imputed, or putative transfer of the sin operated just the result contemplated in the ceremony, namely, the deliverance of the sin; in which the imputation is seen to have been a genuine instrumental truth. In like manner, the imputation of our sins to Christ, and of his righteousness to us, accepted by our faith, is a most operative part and practical verity of the Christian doctrine, and the scriptures of the New Testament, borrowing their forms from the old, are full of it. And, what is more, though we discard the doctrine of imputation in New England, we are yet constantly using the language of it.

Undoubtedly the Reformers misconceived the repre-

sentations of scripture to which I refer, as the schoolmen, before them, had done almost all the objective figures and free metaphors of the bible. It had been the manner of theology, for long ages, to interpret Hebraistic figures Academically, and turn them into Aristotelian dogmas. Accordingly, when Luther declares that Christ, under the burden of the imputed sins of mankind, became "the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel and blasphemer that ever was, or could be in all the world," we shall easily convince ourselves, after our first shudder of feeling is over, that he is only venting his Christian fire, under the exaggerations of his false method. We shall see him laying his sins, by a vehement confession, on the scape goat of Moses, only doing it still as if it were a scape goat of Aristotle. But when Dr. Crisp, after an interval in which the vehement heat of Luther's enthusiasm might be supposed to have cooled away in the church, is found reiterating the same extravagance, tempered in no respect, but rather exaggerated; even arguing, on systematic grounds, that imputation carries a transfer of character; for if God treats Christ as a sinner, it can be only that he treats him as he is; then we see it proved, both that logic can be more extravagant than passion, and as much more blind. He says, (Fuller's Works, Vol. IV., p. 89 :) "Hast thou been an idolater, a blasphemer, a despiser of God's word, a profaner of his name and ordinances, a thief, a liar, a drunkard; if thou hast part in Christ, all these transgressions of thine become actually the transgressions of Christ, and so cease to be thine; and thou ceasest to be a transgressor, from the time they were laid upon Christ, to the

last hour of thy life. You are all that Christ was and Christ is all that you were." This would be abundantly shocking, if it were not so pitifully feeble. But we see in it, plainly enough, that the doctrine of imputation, previously asserted and here pressed to its limit, contained some element radically false.

And the error appears to have been, that the scripture phrases of imputation were taken, not as objective forms, answering to and operative in subjective effects, but as affirmations of some real and judicial transfer. If we ask precisely what it was that made their doctrine of imputation a truth, it was, I have no doubt, the feeling they had of a sacred power and experimental value, in the objective phrases referred to; they only did not settle on the right conception of these phrases; and, as a consequence of this defect, blended false and confused impressions with their doctrine. And yet, as the disciple and translator of a doctrine will sometimes state it, in his simplicity, more exactly than his master; and as we often see, by some straw that a writer drops into the current of his language half unawares, what reveals the true position he is in, more adequately and exactly than words more carefully chosen; it is worthy of notice that the translator of Calvin, by an accidental *quasi* dropped in, sets forth what appears to have been the truest notion of imputation. He says, and it is a curious fact that another translator drops in another *quasi*, at another place, in the same section: "Our guilt and punishment, being *as it were* transferred to him, they must cease to be imputed to us." (Book II., Chap. XVI., Sec. 6.) This, precisely, is the true idea of imputation. It is imputation *as it were*,

an objective, representative imputation, the reality of which is an inward effect, or experience in ourselves. Thus we look on Christ as loading himself with our evils and bearing, *as it were*, our sins. We say, in simple affirmation, that he bears our sins and that the chastisement of our peace is upon him. The real truth of feeling is that, by his suffering life and death, he has produced such impressions, in us, of the authority of God and the sanctity of his law, as would be produced by terms of rigid justice executed against our sin; all of which is powerfully and effectively embodied in the conception that our sins are laid upon him, and that he bears them, and so procures our release.

Or take the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Christ, in the way just described, comes in place of a righteousness in ourselves; and then we see, or, by faith, embrace him as a righteousness imputed to us. And then, if we ask what is the real truth, or verity of this imputation, it is that in holding it we are set in just the attitude of mind, by which the grace and passion of Christ will most effectually work, in our subjective experience, that reversal of the law of sin and death, that deliverance of the judicial consequences of sin, which is the basis of reality in what is called justification. The Romish doctrine is that Christ brings justification to sinners, by making them just or righteous. The Protestant appears to be that he does it, by his righteousness, imputed to them. The true doctrine appears to be, neither exactly one nor the other; or rather to be both; viz., that sinners are made subjectively righteous *by* receiving Christ as an objective or imputed righteousness. For, to make a sin-

ner righteous, it will be seen, involves a deliverance from the judicial consequences of ill desert and sin ; which is a disturbance of God's retributive order, and a rolling back of causes that were vindicatory of the divine justice. And then, if Christ is to be regarded and believed in as doing this, the simplest and most effective form of the belief will be that which receives him as an objective righteousness, to be appropriated as ours. Calling him 'our righteousness' and resting in him as such, will involve, as in a single word, first, the confession of our just condemnation ; secondly, the acknowledgment of all he has done to compensate our deliverance from that condemnation ; thirdly, the recognition of him as a regenerative, supernatural power, by which he reverses the currents of nature and raises us to a union with and participation of the divine nature ; and, fourthly, a continual reference of mind to that perfect beauty and divine righteousness, which compose the character of his person ; a character which, through the simple embrace of it in love and trust, without any thought more reflective, will be ever insinuating itself into the soul and assimilating it to its object. By the wondrous art of the gospel, an attitude so simple and receptive is prepared and all these confluent streams of renovating influence are poured upon it, in the one single phrase of imputation—"Christ our righteousness." And this, precisely, is the apostolic doctrine : "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." It is a righteousness not *unto*, or standing before all, to be accounted theirs in judicial substitution, as in the Protestant doctrine. Neither is it a righteous-

ness thought of simply as being *upon* all, in its transforming power, as in the Romish doctrine. But it is a righteousness *unto and upon* all; upon as being unto, unto that it may be upon; transferred as being imputed, imputed that it may be transferred.

The Romish doctrine is vicious, because it turns the mind directly upon the subjective consideration of an inherent personal righteousness; which withdraws it too much from the attitude of simple objective faith in Christ. If the disciple thinks he discovers the inherent righteousness appearing within, then he is tempted to put some faith in that, and as much less faith in Christ. And then it is very nearly a matter of course that he drops out the idea of faith altogether and begins to pile up righteousnesses before God, in the shape of alms and penances and servile austerities, that gender bondage and not liberty. Besides, it is a proper subject of doubt, whether any such thing as a rigidly *inherent* righteousness is ever to be thought of or can be, whether in man or angel,—whether true righteousness, in created being, is not really and essentially a derivate state, constituted by the participation of God; sustained by him, as truly as sight by the sun, and therefore as truly inconceivable as inherent sight. Is it not the normal state of being that the glory of the created shall be the glory, in them and upon them, of the Uncreated,—all to behold their love in the love, their purity in the purity, their righteousness in the righteousness of God? In this view it may even be a kind of schism against the unity of the perfect state, to speak or think of a really inherent righteousness. For, if God is the originative source of all

good, then created minds are to see all good eternally in him and have it by imputation.

The Protestant doctrine is defective, only as it thinks to hold the imputation too rigidly and speculatively, as being a transaction wholly external to us, a something put to our account in the books of judicial reckoning; not as preparing an attitude of faith and humble receptivity, into which the whole Christ is to be entered and be made unto the receiver, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This is the true attitude of all Christian experience. It takes nothing to itself, finds nothing in itself, but lives more and more suspensively on God. Conscious of growth, it calls the growth experienced 'growth in grace;' that is, a growth in receptivity, a closer nearness to God, a more complete derivativeness, not an inherent righteousness.

Romanism and Protestantism both apart, the true Christian state, the state of life and liberty, is that which says, 'Christ liveth in me,' and that is wrought or maintained, by receiving Christ as our sacrifice of remission, our ransom, our propitiation; in one word, 'our righteousness.' We are to fix the mind and rest the faith on a righteousness that is objective and divine, and to consider every thing good in us to be that. Our life is to be the issue and reigning power of that. It is to be another and divine life dwelling in us, the 'Life of God in the Soul of Man.' And, in order to this, we must be held in the attitude of complete receptivity; living and walking, indeed, but only as another liveth and walketh in us. We must hide our lost being, our will, our works, our ends, and even our sins, in God, and rest our faith

in his all sufficient righteousness. Our thought must be justification by faith alone, a life all derivative and divine.

In this view, I suppose I hold all which made the doctrine of imputation a truth to Luther and Calvin, and the other Reformers; and, of course, that I am as much nearer to their position than the teachers of New England generally, as they are more ready to deny and reject every notion of imputation. Indeed I think it could be shown that Calvin, for example, is continually asserting a view of imputation that makes it, not a mere objective judicial transfer of something to our account, but a *power* in us, and is virtually coincident therefore with the position I have asserted; though it must be admitted that he is often ambiguous in his forms of statement, and uses forms of expression that seem to be inconsistent, or contrary in their meaning. He says that one is "justified by faith who, being excluded from the righteousness of works, apprehends the righteousness of Christ, *invested in which*, he appears, in the sight of God, not as a sinner but as a righteous man." (Inst., book III., chap. ii., sec. 2.) And again—"We do not contemplate him at a distance out of ourselves, that his righteousness may be imputed to us; [i. e., in the judicial records of God;] but because we have put him on, and are ingrafted into his body, and because he hath deigned to unite us unto himself; therefore we glory in a participation of his righteousness." (Sec. 10.) And again—"A man is righteous, not in himself; but because the righteousness of Christ is *communicated* to him by imputation. For the Lord so communicates his righteousness to us

that, with reference to the divine judgment, he transfuses its virtue into us in a wonderful manner." (Sec. 23.) It is very clear, in these and a hundred similar passages, that, whatever may be his theory of imputation, it does not stand before him, as a mere judicial transaction out of himself, but is felt to be a most experimental and operative truth.

Thus much, in reference to the near coincidence of my doctrine with the rejected orthodox doctrine of imputation. What I have called the objective view I suppose to be essentially coincident with it, differing only in the mode, by which the putative, or representatively objective forms of scripture are conceived to get the meaning that constitutes the truth of the doctrine.*

II. I undertake to show that writers of acknowledged orthodoxy have so frequently recognized, in one way or another, what I have called the subjective-objective doctrine of Christ, as to indicate their inward assent to it, and that, when their own opinion is more fully developed, this will be found to be the real mind of their orthodoxy. Whenever the orthodox writers approach a certain point in the doctrine of Christ, which, apart from all satire, may be called the *pons asinorum* of the subject, they uniformly deliver the difficulty met, by a solution

* The doctrine of imputation, as contained in the Catechism, was voted by the General Association of Connecticut, at their last meeting in Litchfield. * I refused concurrence in the vote, in the distinct understanding, that as regards my own position, I might probably affirm it with greater propriety than any other five persons present. But as the vote affirmed what I supposed was universally known to be untrue, viz., that the churches and ministers of the State hold the doctrine, I felt obliged to decline it.

that implies, in one way or another, all that is distinctive in my supposed heresy. They probably forget their solution after the difficulty is once passed, and go on to maintain reasonings that have no proper harmony with it. Their solution is given, in terms that have more the appearance of a rudimental effort to seize what is not distinctly apprehended, than of a settled, well-investigated opinion. And, for just this reason, they yield a more important support to the general doctrine I have advanced. For, when we discover what the church is after, in her tentative and rudimental essays, we are more certain of the truth in finding what she wants, than we can be in her formed and set arguments for what she has.

The point, to which I allude, may be variously stated. Thus the question may rise how God, if he is immutable, can be reconciled or propitiated by the sacrifice of his Son? Or the question may be, if God is the author of the work of Christ, which all admit, whether it does not show that God already loves us and, if so, what truth can there be in the supposition that he is propitiated toward us? In one way or another, the difficulty of supposing any pacification or change in God, or the need of any, comes up and demands some kind of solution. And the solution given will be found, in every case, to turn upon the fact that such objective representations of scripture are somehow needful, as the means of a subjective effect in us; or that they have their truth in subjective effects corresponding to and represented in them.

Not to multiply examples beyond what is necessary,

I begin with Calvin, who says—"And there is much contained in the word 'propitiation'; for God, in a certain ineffable manner, at the same time that he loved us, was nevertheless angry with us, till he was reconciled by the death of his Son." (Book II., chap. xvii., sec. 2.) Where we see, in the phrase "certain ineffable manner," that he is conscious of a degree of doubt or mental obscurity in regard to the point stated; a concession that is the more remarkable that, in the preceding chapter, he had undertaken a formal solution of it. His solution is the following:—

"Such modes of expression [that God was angry, an enemy, and the like] are *accommodated to our capacity*, that we may better understand how miserable and calamitous our condition is out of Christ. For if it were not clearly expressed that we are obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of God and to eternal death, we should not so fully discover how miserable we must be, without the Divine mercy; nor should we so highly estimate the blessing of deliverance. For example, let any man be addressed in the following manner: 'If, while you remained a sinner, God had hated and rejected you, according to your demerits, horrible destruction would have befallen you; but because he hath voluntarily and of his own gratuitous kindness retained you in his favor, and not permitted you to be alienated from him, he has thus delivered you from their danger;' he will be afflicted and will, in some measure, perceive how much he is indebted to the Divine mercy. But if, on the contrary, he be told what the scripture teaches, 'that he was alienated from God by sin, an heir of wrath, obnox-

ious to the punishment of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, a total stranger to the divine blessing, a slave to Satan, a captive under the yoke of sin and, in a word, condemned to and already involved in a horrible destruction; that in this situation Christ interposed as an intercessor; that he has received and suffered in his own person the punishment, which by the righteous judgment of God, impended over all sinners; that by his blood he has expiated those crimes which rendered them odious to God; that by this expiation God the Father has been satisfied and duly atoned; that by this intercessor his wrath has been appeased; that this is the foundation of peace between God and men; that this is the bond of his benevolence toward them; will he not be the more affected by these things, in proportion to the more correct and lively representation of the depth of calamity from which he has been delivered?"—(*Chap. xvi., sec. 2.*)

Now it is not his view that, between these two methods of address, there is any *real* contrariety. He does not say that the former is false. He only thinks it would not be duly impressive, or is insufficiently true. He says also of the latter, which answers to the objective representations of scripture,—“Now this is expressed according to the weakness of our capacity.” That is, it is a bold objective form of truth, answering to our want. But, if true, where is the truth of it?

And the answer he gives is substantially this; that God loved us as creatures, though he was angry at us as sinners, and undertook to redeem us as sinners, because he loved us as creatures. Not that he sent Christ into

the world to operate on him and reconcile him to us as sinners. For he says that, as "there is an irreconcilable opposition between righteousness and iniquity, He can not receive us entirely *as long as we remain sinners.*" Accordingly, the reconciliation hinges, not on a change in God, but on a reference to the fact just now exposed, that the terms of objective propitiation are "accommodated to our capacity," with a view to some effect in us, and really mean that God is reconciled, in the sense that we are reconciled to him. And it is remarkable that he quotes Augustine as saying exactly this, in the very argument referred to.

"Therefore our reconciliation to Him, by the death of Christ, must not be understood as if he reconciled us to God, that God might begin to love those whom he had before hated; *but we are reconciled to him who already loved us, but with whom we were at enmity, on account of sins.*"—(*Book II., chap. xvi., sec. 4.*)

John Howe meets the same question in one of his sermons, but declines the argument as being too difficult for discussion in the pulpit. (Works, 952.) What his answer would be, however, we may easily judge from the fact that he even looks upon propitiation itself, the most objective of all the scripture terms, as a subjective power.

"This [propitiation] is the most proper and apt means to work upon thy heart, to persuade thee to be reconciled to God. And, therefore, is the preaching of Christ crucified, unto them that are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God—the most powerful and wisest method, and which God hath thought fittest to reconcile souls unto himself."—(p. 953.)

Baxter often comes up to the critical point, sometimes from one side and sometimes from another, but always in a way to sanction and fortify my supposed departures from orthodoxy. Thus the objective word *pardon* is to him only a virtual equivalent of the subjective term *sanctification*. "The pardon," he says, "of sin consisteth more in forgiving the *pœnam damni*, the forfeiture and loss of love and the spirit of love, than in remitting any corporal pain of sense. And the restoring of love and the spirit of love, and the perfecting hereof in heaven, is the most eminent part of our executive pardon, justification, and adoption. Thus far sanctification is pardon itself."—(*Pract. Works, fol. Vol. III., p. 610.*)

In his "Life of Faith" occurs the following remarkable passage, which I quote at full length, because it takes hold of the very question Calvin debated, with only doubtful success, and because it gives a general outline view of the whole work of Christ, coinciding in so many particulars with the doctrine I have advanced. The capitals, be it observed, are not mine but his:—

"The scriptures are much in declaring the reasons of Christ's coming into the world—as to be a sacrifice for sin; to declare God's mercy and love to sinners; to seek and to save that which was lost; to destroy the works of the devil. Let this name or description of Christ be engraven, as in capital letters, upon your minds,—THE ETERNAL WISDOM OF GOD INCARNATE, TO REVEAL AND COMMUNICATE HIS WILL, HIS LOVE, HIS SPIRIT, TO SINFUL, MISERABLE MEN."

"Many, by mistaking the doctrine of Christ's intercession, do think of God the Father as one that is all

Wrath and Justice, and unwilling, of himself, to be reconciled unto man. And of the second person in the trinity as more gracious and merciful, whose mediation abateth the wrath of the Father and, with much ado, maketh him willing to have mercy on us. Whereas it is the Love of God, which is the original of our redemption, and it was God's loving the world that provoked him to give his Son to be their Redeemer. And "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And, therefore, we still read of Christ's "reconciling man to God," and not the phrase of his "reconciling God to man." Not but that both are truly wrought by Christ's mediation, (for the scripture frequently speaketh of God's hating the workers of iniquity, and of his vindictive justice, and of the propitiating and atonement which signifieth the same thing.) But the reason is because the enmity began on man's part and not on God's; by man's forsaking God and turning his love from him to the creature, and not by God's forsaking man; and the change of man's state and heart toward God, by true reconciliation, will make him again capable of peace with God; and as soon as man is made an object, fit for the complacency of God, it can not be but that God will again take complacency in him; so that the *real change* must be only in man, and then that *relative* or *denominational* change, which must be in God, will thence immediately result."

"Some also there be, who gather from Christ's death, that God desired the sufferings of Christ as pleasing to him in itself; as if he made a bargain with Christ to sell so much mercy to man, for so much blood and pains of

Christ; and as if he so delighted in the blood of the innocent, that he would the willinglyer do good to us, if he might first forsake and crucify Christ. But this is to contradict Christ's business in the world, as if he who came from heaven, to declare God's love, had come to declare him to delight in doing hurt; and as if he who came to demonstrate God's justice, had come to show that he had rather punish the innocent than the guilty."—(*Pract. Works, Vol. III., p. 564.*)

Now, in what manner Baxter could have managed to cover a greater number of my heresies, in the same number of words, I really do not see. My fundamental doctrine of Christ's work is the same. The double view I have given of the scripture representations, the subjective and objective, is exactly answered by his *real change* and his *relative or denominational*.

The language of Tholuck, already cited, implies or rather expresses, you have seen, a view of the subject essentially one with that which I have advanced in my supposed heresy.

Jenkyn, discussing the scripture terms *propitiation*, *reconciliation* and others of the same kind, explains them in the following manner:—

"When the *aspects* and effects of the divine dispensations alter, the change is not in the infinite, eternal mind, but in the state and relations of the offender toward the divine government. * * When a change is produced in the aspect of the divine administration, that is when God is said to be propitiated or reconciled through the atonement, * * the *actual change* is in the *state of the sinner*."—(*Atonement, pp. 57-8.*)

Symington, who is to be regarded as an example of the sturdy Scotch orthodoxy, crosses the bridge of difficulty thus:—"And are we to suppose, on the authority of scripture too, that the atonement does effect a change in the immutable God? Far be the thought. What we have affirmed is, that the texts in question *seemingly* imply a change in God. We have not said that they really imply such a thing. To speak of a change in the nature, or attributes, or will of God, is blasphemous and absurd. But it is neither blasphemous nor absurd, to speak of a change in the mode of the divine administration. What the atonement effects is, not a change in God the Lawgiver, but a change in the administration of his government; a change in the relation subsisting between creatures and himself. Those whom he formerly treated in a way which is fitly represented to us, by anger, indignation, wrath, he in consequence of what Christ has done, treats in a way that is fitly represented, by love and complacency. But the change is *not in* God; it is in the *creature*, and in the relation in which the creature stands toward God. By means of Christ's death, man is brought out of a state of condemnation and depravity, which God could not but regard with repugnance, into a state of reconciliation and purity, which he can not but look upon with complacency. Whatever change the creature undergoes, God continues the same. It were every whit as reasonable to describe the different appearances which the earth assumes, by day and by night, to a change in the solar luminary, rather than to its own relative position, with regard to that luminary; as to ascribe the state of man, in consequence of Christ's

atonement, to a change in God rather than in man himself."—(*Atonement*, pp. 27–8.)

How exactly this "seeming" change in God, implied in the propitiation of God, this change that is "in the creature and not in God"—resembled to the apparent rising of the sun, which yet is only the rolling of the earth—how exactly this coincides with the subjective-objective view of Christ, which I have advanced, it requires no words to show. And yet the solution disappears with the difficulty, and is not seen to enter itself into the staple doctrine of the treatise, a moment farther. If true, in the matter, nothing is more evident than that it requires the whole doctrine of the subject to be set in conformity with it. I can hardly imagine how it was possible for a logical, systematizing writer, to produce a book in defense of the definition or thesis, that the atonement "is that perfect satisfaction given to the law and justice of God, by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, on behalf of elect sinners of mankind, on account of which they are delivered from condemnation," and not perceive that the argument of the solution referred to, is one that as truly covers the whole ground of the subject as the definition itself; and so qualifies the terms of the definition as to prove its utter insufficiency, its color of virtual falsity, as a statement of Christian truth. And yet, agreeing that the change, in propitiation, is only a "seeming" truth, "a change in the creature not in God," he still brings out a scheme of atonement so rigidly exterior to us, consisting in a compensation to God's justice so legal and commercial, that exactly all for whom it has been paid must be absolved and saved, whether they

repent or not; otherwise "the monstrous impossibility must be maintained, that the infallible Judge refuses to remit the punishment of some, for whose offenses he has received a full compensation"!—(p. 190.)

These references, I think, are sufficient to show, that I am adequately borne out, by the arguments of the best orthodox writers, whenever they are brought to face the principal question, or main difficulty of the subject. Neither let it be objected that it savors of presumption, to suppose that we are able, in this manner, to go beyond the great teachers of past ages and bring forth truths that were laboring in their mind, as the deepest meaning of their doctrine, but which still they only half conceived. Contrary to this, it seems to me that we only do them the greater honor, by showing, in this manner, that they have been competent teachers and have set us forward in our studies, by the impulse they have given and the lights they have gathered round us. However this may be, nothing is more improbable, or even preposterous, than the impression suffered, I believe, by many, that just at the particular moment of history called the Reformation, the true infallible doctrine of Christ was opened to mankind. Exactly contrary to this, we form, it seems to me, no right or properly intelligent conception of Luther and Calvin, save as we see them rising out of the mires of old superstition; the painful legalities of a religion of works, the careful ascetic scruples, the penances of human atonement, the alms-givings that were to pay God the debt of their sins and had no spring in love to men, all the huge pilings of merit which yet could bring no real peace and liberty to the soul; and, since

these are discovered to be certainly not the gospel, beginning their indignant, wrathful Protest against the whole scheme, as a scheme of error and delusion. And when they assert, in place of it, the great Christian truth of Justification by Faith, we are not to suppose that they have settled every thing concerning it; or that God, for once, has given the world two seers who are not prophets, but infallible professors of dogmatic theology. Better is it to say, with Robinson, that "God hath more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. The Lutherans can not be driven to go beyond Luther. The Calvinists stick where Calvin left them. Both were shining lights in their times, yet God hath not revealed his whole will to them. For it is not possible that the Christian world is so lately come out of such thick anti-Christian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once." This, at least, is true Pilgrim orthodoxy, if it be no other.

I have said nothing, in this discussion, of the particular impeachment of my doctrine advanced in the minority report of your committee, simply because I could not imagine it to be necessary. You have doubtless observed the rather singular terms of their standard.* It appears just so far to assert the doctrine of a literal and penal satisfaction of the divine justice, and

* "To cancel the penal claims of condemning law, by voluntarily offering his sufferings and death as a satisfaction therefor, and so to redeem every believer from further exposure to these claims, was the end sought, and intended, and achieved, by Christ, in the work of atonement."—(*Minority Report*.)

so far to hint the doctrine of a limited atonement, as may insure the sanction of extreme orthodoxy; and yet is so daintily worded as not to offend the mind of New England, in its fixed rejection of both. Meantime there is held, back of all, a scheme which is neither this nor that, but a scheme of debt and purchase, more literal than Anselm ever conceived;—a scheme advanced by the member who drew this Report, in a dissertation read before this body a few years ago, and peremptorily rejected by every member of the body; nor by any one more peremptorily, than by the other member of this minority. This theory or scheme, preached also as a sermon before other bodies of clergy, both before and since my book was published, has, in every case, been disapproved by the most competent judges; as involving, first, in the relations of the Father and the Son, a very gross form of tritheism, and secondly, a scheme of divine government, under Christ, that is formally and really anomian. I can hardly suppose, therefore, that you are going now to make it a test or standard of orthodoxy against me. It is rather to be expected, that you will take it as an illustration or example of the manner, in which the general deluge of agreements against my heresy has been raised. They have a plausible show of negative unity against me, but no positive unity among themselves.

I have only to add, in closing the discussion, what I think must be sufficiently evident already, as the main peculiarity of my exposition, that it proposes no single formula as containing the whole truth of the subject, but

is chiefly occupied in showing how, or by what method of use, we may receive the true meaning and power of all the scripture language. This language is to stand, accordingly, as being the best and only competent statement of the Christian doctrine, and is not to be substituted by any words of man's wisdom, or by any formulas that are set in terms of academic and abstractive theology. Finding a ready use, in this manner, for all the terms of scripture, no peculiar style of preaching, such as may properly disturb the peace, or offend the honest convictions of our churches, can possibly result from the exposition I have given. For, whatever formulas we hold as the true account of Christ and his work, and however violent the wars we maintain to defend them, it is remarkable that, in the earnest preaching of Christ and salvation, we break over all terms of theory, to preach a Savior crucified—our life, our sacrifice, our righteousness, our peace, using all the scripture terms, in much the same way that my doctrine requires. If any peculiarity appears in preaching Christ from the point of view here developed, it will be that he is preached more generally and emphatically as a Power; which never offends, and for which I think I can say with truth, our people are longing with real want and hunger. If it be a crime, that I have sought to moisten the dryness they suffer, if I wish to give them a little more of the true bread from heaven, than some of our meager theories will yield them, and if this be taken by you as a fatal heresy, I hope I may be able to accept your judgment, with a degree of fortitude, answering to the earnestness of my convictions.

CONCLUSION.

My argument or exposition is now closed. If it has seemed to you, in the progress of it, that I act the advocate too quietly or remotely, giving you rather a treatise on the topics in question, than maintaining a plea for myself, I hope you will not ascribe it to an affected indifference, in regard to the results of a personal nature that are pending, in the investigation. It is due simply to the confidence I have in my positions and in you—in my positions, because I seem to have discovered, by experimental proofs, that nothing effective can be said against them; and in you, because of the conviction I have that, while you will do nothing out of favor to me, you are not of a temperament to allow any external combinations or importunities, to invade the integrity of your judgments, or disturb the balance of your own personal convictions. On the contrary, if you find me set upon by crowds of adversaries, I seem even to know that, instead of yielding a facile, extempore compliance to their clamors, you will find a magnanimous Christian pleasure in taking the part of courage, and facing whatever odium it may cost, to protect the rights of truth and maintain the honors of justice.

As to the possibility that I may be finally overwhelmed or submerged by these tides that are now pouring upon me, I know not how it is, but I have never had the fear of it for a moment. Perhaps it is that,

having a most intense conviction that what I have said is the truth of God and spoken at his call, I am equally sure that God will take care of it. Violence against the truth is weakness. Numbers increase the weakness. And the worst that can be done against it, by both violence and numbers, is to fight it into power.

You have seen, as the result of my exposition, that while the views I have published will lead, in their practical adoption, to no such diversity in preaching, as can properly disturb the peace and religious comfort of our churches, they are also as remote as they need be, from asserting any point that is dangerously heretical. The sum indeed of my heresies may be stated thus :—

As regards the Person of Christ, I have simply chosen to abstain from a certain inference, heretofore drawn, respecting the interior composition or psychology of his nature; on the ground that, in a matter so essentially abnormal as the incarnation, we are manifestly not authorized in the raising of any such theoretic and constructive inferences.

In regard to the Trinity, where my doctrine has been more abundantly impeached or complained of than any where else, it turns out, beyond a question, that I am essentially orthodox and New England essentially heretical. I deviate from the most rigid and perfect orthodoxy, only in seeking here, as before, to arrest the speculative process at a certain definite point, which, by the conditions of the subject, never was or can be legitimately transcended.

As regards the atonement or work of Christ, I have

shown you that no doctrine pertaining to the subject has, to this hour, been framed, that can be said to have been, or to be the accepted faith of the Christian Church. The nearest approach hitherto made is to be found in the ancient, but now universally rejected, doctrine of a ransom paid to the devil; that having been held for a much longer time, and by a more general consent, than any other. If we take the doctrine of the Reformation for a standard, it can be said, with much greater confidence, that I harmonize with it, than it can be said of the common faith of New England. For the latter dismisses, under sentence of 'absurdity,' all those conceptions of imputation, which figure so largely in the teachings of the Reformers, and even constitute the staple of their doctrine; while I, coinciding in the speculative absurdity of imputation, undertake also to show how these objective conceptions get their proper validity, and enter, even as *necessary elements*, into the practical economy of the Christian life. And if you will interpret the words of the Reformers, in the free and only partially theologic sense they yielded to faith, translating their letter into spirit, their Peripatetic gospel into a Christian; or if you will regard the inmost, but yet only half-developed sense of their speculative doctrine itself, reaching always and visibly after an issue not yet attained to, it will come out as a result, that I am really closer, by far, to their doctrine and more properly in it, than my New England brethren, who have gone the same length, in denial, and shown no positive method of conformity, in place of what they deny.—These, as near as may be, are my sins against orthodoxy.

And yet, the only question worthy of your attention appears to be that which asks what is true, not what is orthodox; and I consider it to be my Christian duty to say distinctly that, while I have submitted these comparisons in a way of deference to others, I must still rest my vindication wholly on the ground that my doctrine is true; or, more exactly still, the living truth itself of God and salvation. For not even truth is a valid interest, apart from salvation, or the uses of the soul. It is simply in this view that I have undertaken these discussions. In my endeavor to secure, for the great truths in question, a less dogmatic, more truly spiritual and believing reception, I have thought little of the interests, whether of sect, or of theory; or, I will confess to you, even of orthodoxy. My conviction is, that the lamentable defect of Christian character and power which distinguishes the piety of our times, is due to the fact that, in the place of a living faith in Jesus Christ, we have substituted, to a much greater extent than we know, a notional, academic, professorial faith; and the views of my book have their only interest to me, in the fact that they are the remedy proper to our disease.

It can not fail, I think, to have been painfully impressed on you, as on all attentive readers of the New Testament scriptures, that there is a remarkable contrast between the Christian spirit and life in our times, and that of the disciples of the apostolic age. It may not be easy to draw the distinction, or to show precisely where and what it is, and yet we feel it. Their faith is vital. It fills the life, dominates practically in the character,

possesses the spirit of the men. We see that Christ is being formed in them. They appear to be enveloped in Christ. He is the new man put on; they are created in righteousness after him. They live, as it were, in deadness to mere nature, a life that is hid with Christ in God. We use the same language, or try to use it, but it fits badly and does not appear to mean the same thing. It seems, rather, as if the meaning had been sifted out of the words and lost. Our faith, or what we call our faith, wears a superficial, flashy, semi-abortive look. The change it works in character appears to be only a gentle and often scarcely distinguishable modification; not a making all things new, not a new spirit breathed, a new fire kindled in the center of the soul itself. It is not so much as if we had felt the contact, in Christ, of the divine nature and been polarized anew by the divinity participated, but more as if we had undertaken ourselves to be like the divine, and do some divine or Christly things, in our own will and way and, of course, in a very feeble, un-transforming way.

And the main cause of this defect will be discovered, I think, as already intimated, in the fact that we have taken the great truths of religion out of the sphere of faith, and subjected them to the dominion or disposal of the natural judgment; substituting, in this manner, a dogmatic and professorial Christianity, in place of the divine teaching or doctrine that is called SPIRIT and is to be realized only by faith and an immediately divine experience. What I intend by this will be seen more clearly, perhaps, than in any other way, if we take a single passage of scripture that contains the true apostolic idea

of the Christian truth and life, and bring our modern demonstrations into comparison with it. Thus we may take, for example, the declaration of John—"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." This anointing is the inward showing of Christ, called a few verses previous the unction of the Holy One; coinciding entirely with the declaration of Christ himself, when he says of the Comforter, "he shall receive of mine and show it unto you;" also with the apostolic doctrine of the "Spirit" or the "Spirit of Christ," in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans; also with his doctrine of "spiritual discernment," in the first epistle to the Corinthians. The same idea is continually re-appearing in all the writings of the apostles. It is the apostolic idea of faith and discipleship—just that also, as we shall see, apart from all censoriousness, that least distinguishes and most faintly appears in the Christian characteristics of our times.

Thus I think it will be found that, in the general, we do not really admit or conceive the idea itself of this inward unction or anointing. It is that a soul truly given up to Christ, filled with the spirit of Christ, is filled, in virtue of that fact, with a supernatural light; in other words, it is brought into such a close, interior union with the will and spirit of God that it is acted by God, filled with the consciousness of God and, by means of this pure inward experience, lighted up to know the meaning of things, and conform, with a divine facility,

to that which is truest and best in them. This is the anointing that is received of Christ, which abideth in the soul as a lamp of secret illumination; which makes it unnecessary that some man should be always teaching the disciple, because the anointing itself teacheth all things, and sheddeth its own divine light upon all experiences and duties. The idea was not that every disciple was become infallible, or an inspired prophet and teacher, but still that he had a kind of qualified inspiration. In ceasing to be simply natural or living in his natural faculties, and becoming spiritual, actuated and filled with the Divine Spirit, he was conceived to be capable of discernment in another method, which is called spiritual discernment. And no truth was more real than this. They lived in it. God was so near in the anointing of the Christly spirit, that they had an inward light and teaching from him, that was immediate.

But we are grown shy of this kind of experience. We think to be more philosophical, and so we take up the assumption that God is one side of a great gulf, and we the other; and that all we can know of him is by inferences drawn across the gulf, or notional considerations brought over, and second hand truths imported; which, if our judgment or the judgment of our head approves, then *they* are likely to have a good influence on us! Our religion is fed therefore by the light of notions, and not to any extent by the immediate illumination of God in the soul. We seem to imagine that Christianity has become a science, that it has been thought out, that preaching is lecturing in the science by competent professors, and that Christian living is keeping to the scientific rules

and tests of what is called the doctrine. Or we are bibliolaters instead of Christian believers; assuming that God, long ages ago, miraculously inspired men to teach the truths of salvation, which we are to take into our natural judgment and by that only to distinguish; no kind of inspiration or anointing being allowed *us*, however qualified, that we may be able to spiritually discern the meaning and power of the Word.

And it is only a part of the same defect that we only faintly believe in prayer. For we do not allow the immediate experience of God, in a state of Divine Consciousness. I say we do not—I only mean that we feebly do it and doubtfully; that we live a kind of second hand religion, a notional religion, which is distant and dry, and knows God only as he breaks into our experience, by his immediate light, despite of the many fences we raise against him, by the wisdom of our heads. Hence the insipid look of our discipleship. Hence the innumerable sects into which we divide the body of Christ. It is because we are so little in the spirit, and so much in our heads; or if we draw from the scriptures, that we only draw by our heads. We kindle a fire and compass ourselves about with sparks and walk in the light of our fire and in the sparks that we have kindled, and of course we become as many as our sparks are; for the one anointing that teacheth all things and is no lie, we still suspect is, at bottom, an extravagance.

When Christ says, for example, "we will come unto him and make our abode with him;" "I will love him and will manifest myself unto him;" these, say the teachers and interpreters whose guidance we accept, are

figures and have their only meaning in the fact that, if we do right, if we walk by faith, we shall have a good conscience and be encouraged to think or *infer* that God loves us! And so our very experience and character as disciples are fed or supported by inferences only; as Elijah's body was by ravens, at the brook Cherith. We infer that God approves us and that is our assurance of faith, our peace, our Christian experience! That a state of Divine Consciousness is the normal state of souls, when sin is cast out, we do not seem to imagine. That when a sinner truly dies to himself and comes into the will of God, just there God is manifested in him, and that the sacred joy he feels is a conscious knowing, or discovery to him of God in his self-evidencing light,—this does not enter into our conception of a possible Christian experience. The disciples of old time had other impressions. They said, in their simplicity—the anointing we have received abideth in us. They said—Christ shall be formed within us, and we will be new creatures in Christ Jesus. They said—Christ liveth in us—we are God's temple—we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—we know God—we have the witness in ourselves. They said—the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, so that our desires and groanings are shaped into prayers, which are according to the secret will of God. In fact, they regarded their whole life as a divine experience and a work of God. In which they are seen only to have taken the incarnation in its full import; for what does this sublime, transcendent mystery signify to man, but simply this—the proposed and possible union of the divine and the human; which, in fact, is the

only true and significant remedy of sin. Hence the tremendous power of Christianity, when it burst into the world; for it kindled a divine fire in the earth and flashed through the blinded nations, as lightning in the night. It suddenly made men to be more than men, because it made them partakers of the divine nature—in which they forgot, as it were, themselves, became impassible to fear and suffering, and lived and acted, before mankind, as if they were only vehicles of the divine truth and love,—vehicles of the spirit and power of Jesus. We seem unable to meet such impressions. Instead of this immediate divine experience, which is the glory, joy, sublimity of a true discipleship, we try to manage a new life through notional influences, reasons, motives, that are shadows of divinity in our head, and not the living Christ in our heart. Hence the feeble, unrenovated, undivine look of what we call our faith. It is, after all, not so much faith as self-management, self-excitement, self-culture, self-illumination.

Our inability also to make religion live, in connection with the common duties and callings of the world, is equally manifest and is referrible to the same cause. We are not in the spirit of Christ, to be quickened and governed and guided by Christ, in that which alone makes his guidance a reality; in the business, the society, the pleasures and all the interests of life. We have not that unction of the Holy One, that abideth in us and teacheth us, or openeth to us the way of duty, in all things. Therefore one of two things appears to be necessary, either that we withdraw from the world altogether, to live a separate, ascetic life and so to keep our-

selves in safety ; or else, if we go into the world, that we be wholly buried and overwhelmed by the power of the worldly spirit. The latter is the form our error commonly takes, and how miserably evident it is on every side. How large the mass of those who, assuming to be disciples, are yet seen to live in a manner scarcely different from the unbelievers. The Spirit of Christ is not in them, you can not find it. They are selfish. They live in their passions. Their object is the world. The world is their anointing, which, in all things, they believe and follow. Now there would be no difficulty whatever in carrying a Christian spirit directly into the world and making it live there and unfold itself, even the more powerfully and proportionally, because of the works and duties that engage us, if only the anointing of Christ were in us. Going into it to be acted and ruled by the indwelling grace of God or of Christ, then all its works and calls meet us in harmony and become our helpers. God then is all in all—there is no world. The power that reigns within reigns also without, and all the exercise and discipline of life, instead of making the disciples weak, and worldly, and light, and empty, as we see it do now, will only purify them, make them more solid and firm and more heavenly in their spirit.

The remarkable inconstancy, too, of religious faith and character, in our times, indicates the want of just that which *abides* and becomes a real renovating power. We seem to see that the Christian spirit is a casual, transitory spirit. We even expect it to be so and are content to have it so. Let me be understood. I do not undertake

to say that the progress itself of the disciple may not require, that he should pass through a succession of varied states and exercises. But variety is one thing and inconstancy is another. Life is always passing through varieties, but never ceases. So when the spirit of Christ enters into a soul and begins to be formed there, it is the anointing that abides, it is Eternal Life itself. The soul that believes is anchored by its faith and made fast in it. It has forsaken all and, ceasing to be centered in itself, it is centered in God.⁶ Hence, according to the ancient, original conception of piety, it was to be a stable and continuous state. The call was—"abide in me and I in you." And the promise of the Comforter—"he shall abide with you forever." And the warning—"if a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch." And, accordingly, having this deep, inward union to God, it used to be seen that it changed the life and became a sovereign, all transforming principle of good in the soul. What then shall we understand, but that our casual, flickering, going and returning piety wants the real anointing that abides, and is only a superficial and feebly realized principle?

It is only a necessary consequence of the same general defect that we have so few Christly characters in our times. It used to be seen that Christian experience entered into men as a great and wonderfully invigorating power. It made the disciples wear somewhat of the look of their master. They were dead to themselves. They lived in love. The cross was their glory. They could endure hardness. They were simple and direct, living by divine guidance as the anointing that was in

them taught them. But now that simple believing method is gone. We are turned critics, in place of earnest believers unto righteousness; amateur disciples, praising the heroes of the faith, whose faith we do not follow. The inward anointing and teaching of Christ, that, which if we have, both shapes and feeds a character—no thanks to criticism—how little of this do we see; how few really Christly men and women, on whom the Christian spirit seems to have taken its genuine hold and exerted its true ennobling power. The old Christian athletæ and giants of Christly fortitude are gone—we have no heroes; or if we have a few, we call them enthusiasts, or fanatics, or by some evil name that puts them out of our company.

Indeed we have a way of saying that the days of heroism have gone by, and that no such fruits are any longer to be expected—not once imagining, I fear, that the days of heroism have gone by, rather because the virtue itself is discontinued, than because the demand for it is expired. It is very possible, I know, to profess Christ, in this age, and not be burned at the stake. Still it is now as true as ever that “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” Let any disciple receive the true indwelling spirit of Jesus and the unction of his life and passion, and he will find that he has ways enough given him, in which to exercise the grace of his passion. Or let any one set himself to receive all the beatitudes of Jesus but the last, and that last will be laid upon him to receive, whether he will or not. There is never an age that does not, somehow, invite the heroic virtues of the faith and prepare a

cross to be borne by the great Christly characters. We have only lost the anointing that consecrates them.

Brethren, I am not censorious or severe in these strictures. Their essential truth I think must be evident to you all. And yet, with a form of piety so little apostolic, we are engaged in undertakings, greater by far, than the apostles or Christians of the apostolic age, either knew or conceived. We have undertaken the conversion of the world. It is very difficult, I think, not to fear that so great a work is impossible, with our present style of discipleship. It is too superficial, too little in the spirit of Jesus and his sacrifice. I wish it were less clear that all our imposing and magnificent plans for this object, are destined, ere long, unless God breathes into us a more genuine faith and a deeper experience, to go out in smoke and cease. This, I believe, is the conviction that is growing upon many sober minds, that are deepest in the interest of these undertakings; and the sooner this conviction is admitted by us all, the better will it be for us.

In one view, these great combinations or combined movements, in which we are now enlisted, are the most respectable signs of our modern Christian life. And yet, how easily may our piety degenerate under them, into a mere corporate exercise; a faith in means, and machineries, and anniversary platforms; a piety of contributions, given as the cheapest substitute for self-renunciation, and the burdensome fidelity of a godly and devout life. There was a real and true lifting of the Christian spirit, I certainly believe, in connection

with these enterprises, at the time of their inception. Is there no reason to suspect a subsidence of that spirit, in their continuance and progress? The conductors of them now begin to warn us, with a feeling of visible concern, that we must either advance or retreat, and can not hold a simply fixed position. They tell us, furthermore, that we certainly can not advance, without a new baptism of the Christian spirit. God has given us successes, God opens ways by his Providence and beckons us forward; but we are neither kindled by successes, nor ready to follow the divine intimations. It is conceivable that God may employ these great wheels of corporate movement, so as to exert in them a more than apostolic power. But they will be lifted up, only as the living creatures of faith are lifted up over against them, and the spirit of the living creatures enters continually into them.

There is yet another danger here, which many do not seem as yet to perceive. These very undertakings involve a reconstruction of our whole Christian economy and character, and especially the subsidence and final discontinuance of the old dogmatic order. The dogmatic era closed at the moment when these undertakings begun. Before, the organizing force was dogma; henceforth it is work. Then the testing of souls, thus and thus, and laying them up, as it were, for salvation, was the principal idea; now we are more occupied with results and less with abstractions. As a necessary consequence, we can not be as rigid as we were, even when we hold the same opinions. We spread ourselves in feeling, beyond the old lines that used to hem us in.

We long to be one with those who have the same ends, and feel it to be a principal point of unity, that we are co-workers, actuated by a common zeal for the salvation of man. And so, by a silent process of liquefaction, the throne of dogmatism is visibly melting away from under it. In all that I have said respecting it, I have only spoken out that sentence in words, which you all are passing in your works. And the question is not, any longer, whether dogmatism is to lose its authority and cease; but simply this, whether any thing is to be set in its place, that will save us from a state of indifference and dissipation that is frightful to contemplate?

And just here it is, that I have found so great interest in the views presented in my book. Seeing that the transition must be made, and can not be arrested, or rather that it is virtually made already, I consent to it, and look about to find a new organic principle that will impart a better vigor than we have lost, and condense our dissipation into a more genuine, broader Christian Unity; viz., the unity generated by faith, or what is called, in scripture, the unity of the Spirit. As we have undertaken apostolic works, I suppose that God will have us receive the apostolic spirit in the apostolic liberty, and go to our works, endued with power from on high. There is nothing peculiar in the views I have presented, save that they better agree with an age of beneficent activity, and the comprehensive or catholic tendency, inseparably connected with it. I have only not pushed the great Christian truths of the Incarnate Person, the Trinity, and the Sacrifice of Christ, to their last limit, in the terms of reason or theory. I

have only not said that we have reasoned out and know all that is inmost or most interior, in these deep mysteries that lie between us and the infinite. I present them as symbolic or instrumental truths, and not as scholastic abstractions or results of theory. To raise a defense against all those extravagances which ignorant and overheated enthusiasts are wont to indulge, in the name of spiritual teaching, I endeavor to ascertain exactly how much may be known of these truths by the natural understanding; and then allow them, for what remains, to discover their virtue and yield their holy anointing to faith. Accordingly, we are allowed never to be in them, simply as yielding them the assent of the head; but only as having a present realization of their power, in the state of fellowship with God they open in our experience. We can easily agree, in the natural understanding, to receive these truths in their symbolic instrumental forms; and then we can as easily meet in their spiritual import, by being in the Spirit under them. And this is Christian unity, apostolic, vital, practical, energetic,—unity cemented in God; and really I know not where to look for any other.

It is simply in this practical, experimental view of the truths in question that I have spoken, many times, in these discussions, of our relations to the Unitarians. I have done it, not as suggesting terms of ecclesiastical adjustment; but because they have the same spiritual interest in the truths discussed that we have, and because it is under these truths, insufficiently conceived, that we have suffered some common disasters. God forbid that we should think to be as Jews and Samari-

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tans, and look on that as the end of our Christian duty. We have a common history, which is the history, in a sense, of our nation itself. We are brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, and for such an apostle was able, if it could do any good, even to wish himself accursed from Christ. Having the same free polity, in religion, derived from our fathers, it is greatly to be desired, both for the fathers' sakes and our own, that this free polity should be seen to have a self-remedial principle in its freedom, and a power from God to restore its own casual aberrations. I wish I were not obliged to add, as I do with some mortification, that the admirable dignity and candor exhibited, on their side, in the strictures they have made upon my book, compel a contrast with the violent and, it seems to me, rather extravagant severities indulged in our own, that too little favors our supposed purity in the truth.

The case now, brethren, is before you. It is very possible for you, I know, to have a different judgment of what I have done, from that which I entertain myself. But it can not be difficult for you to see, that whoever of Christ's true friends and followers may undertake, in this manner, to commend a less academic faith and open the way to a higher and more transforming experience, will, if they are right, have much of odium to encounter. But if they consent to suffer gladly, if they take their part, in this manner, with God and lay themselves upon his altar, it is not your belief that He will reject them, and as little to be imagined that they will be rejected by you.

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